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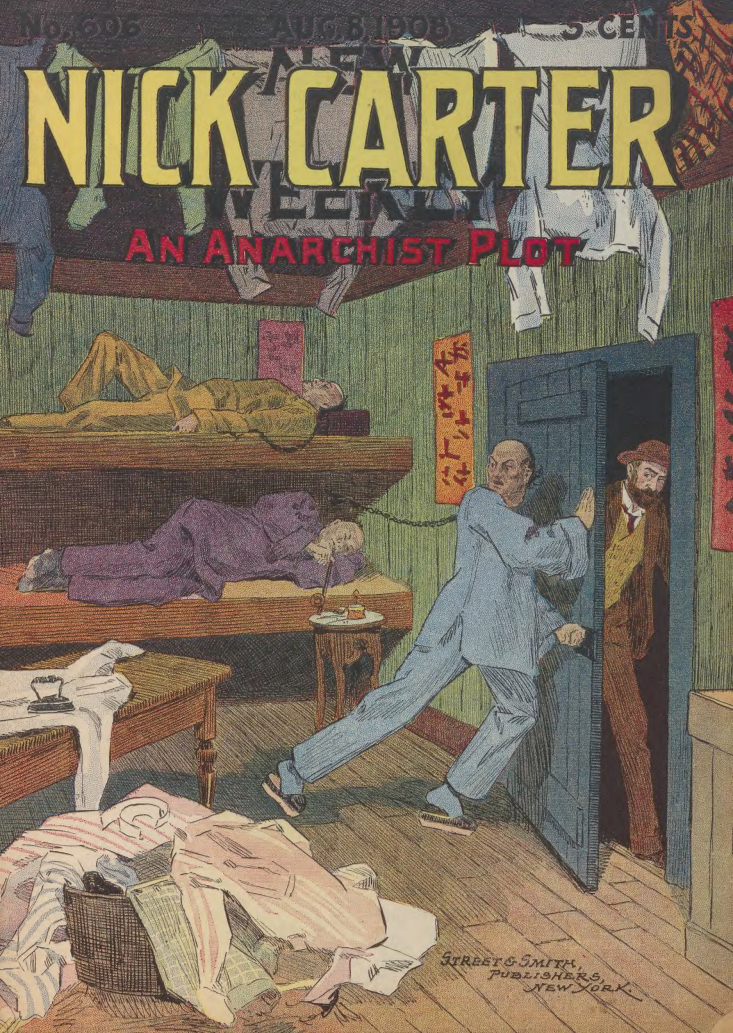
NEW WEEKLY

NICK CARTER

AN ANARCHIST PLOT



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NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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AN ANARCHIST PLOT;

OR,

Nick Carter On a Difficult Trail.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE LETTER OF WARNING.

Nick Carter was seated in his study one bright Sunday morning with an open letter in his hand, that had been delivered half an hour previously by a messenger, and although Nick's man Joseph had directed the messenger to wait in the lower hall until Mr. Carter could read the letter, the youth had taken the opportunity as soon as Joseph's back was turned to decamp.

Although Nick was seated there as has been described, he was not looking at the letter; instead he was gazing in an abstracted manner through the window, for he had already read the missive through twice, and now he was considering what he had read.

The letter was signed "Michael X. O'Brien."* We will give it here just as it was written. It was dated at Philadelphia, whither Nick knew that O'Brien had gone; for Michael had once been a convict, although innocent of the crime for which he was convicted, and had served time in one of the state prisons of Pennsylvania. But Nick had managed to free him and to restore his citizenship. He had been convicted and sentenced under the name of Cashel.

This same Michael had formerly been associated with a "group" of anarchists, although he had never sympathized with them, but Nick knew that the man was in a position to send the warning that the letter contained.

But there were certain things in the letter that puzzled the detective; and those, taken in connection with the fact that the messenger had refused to wait, made him cautious about accepting the entire contents of the document without reservation.

Here is the letter:

"MY DEAR MR. CARTER:

"In a roundabout manner which I have not time to describe fully to you I have learned that a very important meeting of anarchists is to be held to-morrow

*Full particulars concerning Michael O'Brien are contained in Nos. 604 and 605, NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

night in the city of New York for the purpose of devising ways and means of freeing from prison those of the order who are now confined in the city of Washington; and, also, so I am informed, your life is to be sworn away. Of course, if that is so, measures will be adopted for putting you to death without more delay than is necessary. The information came to me through a member of the group to which I formerly belonged, who has not heard of my disaffection and of my own condemnation.

"Of course you will understand why I can personally do nothing to learn about the proceedings of the meeting in question. I would be instantly recognized and never allowed to leave the place alive; nor is there any person whom I can trust sufficiently to send there and report to me.

"But it has occurred to me that your own fertile brain might devise some method of ascertaining what it seems necessary that you should know, and so I write this letter.

"I have not been able to learn just where the meeting is to be held. Such things are always kept very secret, and the place of meeting is always whispered from one to another. But I can tell you how you will be able to find out where it will be held.

"Two persons, a man and a woman, will start out at eleven o'clock to-night from that same house in Twenty-seventh Street where you arrested Zenobia Zara, and if you shadow them to their destination, they will take you directly to the place. I cannot describe them more than to say that the man will have red hair and a red beard and that the woman who will be with him is taller than he is; but that ought to be a sufficient description for your guidance.*

"I wish it were possible for me to go to New York with this information, and to tell you by word of mouth all about it, but the people with whom I have obtained employment have decreed that I make a business trip to Chicago, and I must start at once. So I am sending this letter to New York by a friend who is not an anarchist, and who does not know its contents, and he has promised either to deliver it to you in person, or at least to see that it is forwarded to you by a trusty messenger. I do not like to commit it to the mails fearing that some accident might delay it."

The letter was signed by Michael's full name, and this, so far as Nick knew, was his signature; but he recalled the fact that he had never seen Michael's signature, so he could not be sure as to that.

The detective had already made use of the telephone instrument at his elbow, had called up Philadelphia and had been informed by the landlady of the house where Michael boarded that Mr. O'Brien had sent word home the preceding evening that he was suddenly called to Chicago, and would be absent the better part of the coming week.

*For the history of Zenobia Zara, the Anarchist Queen, see Nos. 604 and 605 of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

This information seemed to be in a measure a corroboration of the contents of the letter, and yet deep down in the detective's subconsciousness he realized a doubt of its genuineness.

If the messenger had not decamped in such a strange manner, and had permitted himself to be questioned—but what was the use in thinking about that. The messenger had gone.

In the letter, Michael—if he wrote it—referred to a house in Twenty-seventh Street as the place where the detective had arrested Zenobia Zara. Zenobia Zara was one of those prisoners referred to as confined in Washington. She was an anarchist of anarchists; a sort of queen among them; a terrorist. With her were two other desperate anarchists named Sacha Vassili and Sergius Tomschk.

The house in Twenty-seventh Street adjoined the one in which Danny, Nick Carter's chauffeur lived, and Nick had on that occasion entered the former by making use of the latter, going to the roof by means of the scuttle and so descending into the latter.

Nick understood perfectly well why Michael would have written the letter as he had done, for on a former occasion Michael had instructed the detective thoroughly in all the secrets of the anarchists, so that at any one of their so-called "dark" meetings he knew that he could pass muster all right save for only one thing; this:

Anarchists, when they join the order, are given what is called a "cause" name; a name not their own, and used only among the group to which they belong. If one has not a "cause" name he is as good as dead the instant he presents himself at a meeting; or if one gives a false one—well, the consequences are likely to be swift and sure.

But Nick believed that he could see a method of overcoming even this difficulty, if only he could be sure in his own mind that the whole thing was not a carefully devised plan to entice him into the power of the people who wished to destroy him.

There had been, during Nick's former experiences with the anarchists, a young Pole associated with them whose name was Thaddeus Morawitz, and whose "cause" name the detective happened to know. It was Orloff.

Now Thaddeus—or Orloff, as we are likely to continue to refer to him here—had not only been homesick to return to Poland, but he had also become thoroughly disgusted with anarchy and anarchists, and Nick had smuggled the young man out of the city,

placed him aboard a steamship, paid his passage, and sent him home.

Nick was satisfied in his own mind that the young man's former associates had no idea what had become of him. The only man among them who had known about it was dead; and so the detective believed that by disguising himself thoroughly he might be able to pass himself off successfully as Orloff; at least, up to a certain point, and particularly if the meeting was to be a "dark" one.

A "dark" meeting of anarchists is one where there are condemnation proceedings to be held, where a man or a set of men are condemned to death and where a selection is made of the "instrument"; that is, the man who is to commit the deed.

Such meetings are held in absolute darkness. The lights are not turned on until after the condemnation proceedings are finished, and the man who is to murder the victim has been selected. On such occasions, also, every member attends the meeting in some sort of disguise, although this is not adopted as a means of protection against each other, but is used because in the case of a raid by the police, those who are fortunate enough to escape need not fear recognition afterward by the officers who have chanced to see them.

The disguises on such occasions are very simple, usually consisting only of a wig and beard and a suit of clothing which is unlike anything the man is in the habit of wearing. At times, spectacles are added.

Nick believed that he could pass himself off very readily as Orloff so long as the meeting continued to be a "dark" one. But he realized that he must escape from it before the lights were turned on afterward, for otherwise discovery would be certain.

He knew all the passwords; he could give all the grips; he could imitate the voice of Thaddeus Morawitz sufficiently well to answer to the "cause" name of Orloff without immediate fear of detection—and if he could manage in some way to escape from the place of meeting before the lights were turned on, he might attend it successfully.

That is, provided always that the whole thing was not a "plant."

Therein lay the danger; and that was what he was thinking about so seriously while he sat there staring through the window at nothing.

His intuitions told him that it was a trap. Logic said that it was not.

The letter he had received seemed authentic enough; but then again there was the disappearance of the messenger who had brought it, and there was the sudden departure of Michael from the city of Philadelphia for the West.

The letter told him how he could shadow two of the members of the group and so discover the locality of the secret meeting, and if he wished to find out all the particulars of what was intended, it was necessary that he should be present at that meeting.

On the other hand he believed that he might accomplish approximately the same results by concealing himself inside the house in Twenty-seventh Street and keeping tabs on the man and the woman who had been described to him.

But that was not so certain by any means.

They might not return there after they attended the meeting.

Even if they did, they might never refer to the subject of the meeting in their private conversation; or, at least, might not do so in a manner that would supply information, even if Nick were fortunate enough to overhear them.

Patsy and Chick were both away so that it became necessary for him to do whatever he decided upon alone.

He read the letter through again with knitted brows; then he rose, crossed the room, filed it away for future reference, and returned to his seat with his mind made up.

He would attend the meeting no matter what came of it.

He would take the chance that had been offered him.

If it were a plant, a trap, he would meet it as best he could. He had fought his way out of tight places before now; he would take his chance of doing it again.

Having made the decision, he felt better, for when the detective once decided upon a thing it was rare indeed for him to change.

And at that moment there was a tap at the study door, and in response to his summons, Danny, his chauffeur, who lived next door to the Twenty-seventh Street house, entered the room.

CHAPTER II.

DANNY BRINGS SOME NEWS.

"Ah, Danny," said the detective, "I was just on the point of sending for you."

Danny grinned. Then he said:

"Well, sir, I have come to tell you about something that I think you ought to know. Only it wouldn't surprise me if you already knew about it, because you seem, sir, to have a way of finding out things that is wonderful."

"What is it that you have to tell me, Danny?"

"It's about the house next door, sir."

"Yes? What about it?"

"It was a week ago last night, wasn't it, when you went through the scuttle to the roof of my house and down through the other scuttle to the interior of the other house, and arrested that murtherin' anarchist woman—although I will admit that she's about the purtiest creature I ever looked at—arrested that woman Zenobia Zara?"

"Yes."

"Well, me wife Nora has been afther keepin' half an eye on that house ever since."

"I'm glad of that, Danny. Go on."

"For two or three days past she tells me she has been seein' a slatherin' of quare-lookin' people going in there, and comin' out, too, one time and another."

"She has, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Last night I got home a little earlier than usual, you'll remember, sir."

"Yes."

"Nora had kept the hull business from me until then; but last night when I got home she told me all about what she'd been seein', and she thought you ought to know about it. You see, sir, it was Nora's idea that them anarchists are usin' the place for holdin' some of their meetings, and she thought maybe you'd like to stop them."

"Quite right, Danny."

"But I says to her, says I, 'Nora, what's the use of tellin' the chief that if we ain't got more to go wid it?' She says, 'Sure,' and I says, 'I'll find out if there is any more;' and so, sir, as soon as I thought it was late enough I ups and hikes to the roof meself and does the same scuttle act that you did—and, faith, here I am again, safe and sound, although at wan time divil a bit did I ever expect to see the light of day again."

"Good, Danny! Tell me about it."

"That's what I'm afther doin', sir."

"What time did you go to the roof, Danny?"

"It was soon afther 'leven, sir."

The detective nodded and Danny continued:

"Before makin' the descent upon them, sir, I thought it would be as well to kape half an eye on their front dure, an' so I fixes up me shavin'-glass against the side of me parlor window so that by sittin' still and looking in it I could see every blessed spalpeen who put a foot on them steps next dure."

"That was a good idea."

"There's an electric light across the street a little way down it, as you know, sir, and by the aid of that I could see well enough for me purposes."

"Sure."

"So I watched from nine o'clock till 'leven, sir. First there comes a chap wid whiskers, about nine-thirty. Then another chap with whiskers a little later; then more whiskers and more of them at intervals until 'leven o'clock, and then I thought it was time to act."

"How many had gone into the house while you were waiting and watching?"

"Four; no more."

"All men?"

"Yes."

"Well, get on with your tale."

"I took down me shavin'-glass and left the window. Then I hikes to the roof as I said, and presently lets meself down inside the next house; and bimeby I works me way down to the parlor flure, where all the time I can hear voices talking."

"So you overheard what they were saying, did you, Danny?"

"That's the divil of it, sir. I overheard what they were saying well enough, but divil a worrd of it could I understand. They were talking in some foreign lingo that I didn't understand a little bit."

"That is too bad. I wish it had occurred to you to come over here after me as soon as Nora told you what was doing there."

"Well, sir, it did occur to me. But I figured that maybe Nora was mistaken, and that I might call you there for nothing; and, also, sir, it never occurred to me, at all, at all, that they would talk in a lingo I couldn't understand."

"So you did the best you could under the circumstances. All right. Go on."

"If I couldn't understand what they *said*, I was, nevertheless, where I could look into the room and *see* them, and I could read some of their gestures purty well, sir."

"Good. Tell me all about it."

"And more, sir, they used names while they were talking; yours, sir, more than any other."

"So they were talking about me, were they?"

"To beat the band. You and Zenobia, and Michael Cashel—that was how they called him, but I knew that they meant O'Brien."

"Yes."

"And Vassili and Tomschk; and Major Moore. Who might he be, sir?"

"The chief of police in the city of Washington." *

"Well, they had considerable to say about him, too."

"What did you understand by their manner and their gestures, Danny?"

"Well, sir, whenever they spoke of you it was as if they had you there, bound and gagged on the flure in front of them; as if they were going to murder you at once, and you were already there in their power for them to work upon; see?"

"Yes."

"I can't tell you anything, sir, only the general idea I got from the whole thing."

"And what was that?"

"It struck me, sir, that they were talking over the details of some plot by which they intended to send you and that Major Moore on the long journey; and as I happen to know that the other names they mentioned, except only Michael, are in prison, I figured that it was also a plan to get them out of it."

"I think you figured it out correctly. Of course they also mentioned Zenobia?"

"Sure thing; but divil a worrd of it could I understand."

"How many people were there altogether?"

"The four men I have told you about, and the two women who live in the house."

"Wasn't there any English spoken during all the time you listened to them?"

"Not once."

"You spoke about thinking at one time that you would never see the light of another day; I hope they did not discover your presence, Danny."

"Divil a bit, sir; only onct I thought they had."

"How was that?"

"Well, they were talkin' together in what we call the back parlor. I was in the front parlor, for I had crept down the stairs and crawled under the sofa. It seemed the likeliest spot for my purposes."

"Yes."

"Well, sir, them women kape a cat in the house—and *such* a cat. Sure it's as big as any two cats you ever saw; and while I was lying there listening—though much good it did me, bad cess to their haythenish lingo—I stuck me head out to see a little better into the room where they were seated; and sure, sir, I stuck it for fair into the whiskers of the cat, who was walkin' around investigatin' things."

"And then——"

"Sure, I don't know which was the most surprised, the cat or me. The cat jumped four feet into the air, backward; and spit—— Phst! phst! phst! She went, like that; and her tail was the size of me arm, so it was, sir."

The detective laughed at Danny's description, for he acted it out when he told it.

"I ducked," continued the chauffeur. "I crawled as far back against the wall as I could, and I sure thought I was done for then. One of the women exclaimed something in her lingo, and she came running into the room, followed by two of the men; and they stood there close to me hidin'-place, talkin' for a long time, during which I held me breath. Then, when I had about decided that I'd never see Nora again, they went back into the other room. I think, sir, that is about all the story I've got to tell."

"How did you finally get away from the place?"

"Sure, I waited where I was until they were all gone—and until I was purty well satisfied that the women were asleep up-stairs. Then I crawled out and returned by the way I got there."

"Without alarming anybody?"

"Divil an alarrm, sir."

"Isn't it a little bit strange, don't you think, that the people in that house have never discovered the scuttle has been tampered with?"

"I don't know as to that, sir."

"Would you recognize any of those men again?"

"One of them."

"Why not all of them, if you saw them?"

"Sure, sir, the whole bunch of them wore false whiskers and wigs. But one of them took his off, and I saw his face, all right. I'd know him again anywhere."

"Did you hear any of them address the others by names that you could remember?"

"I heard 'em use names, all right, but they were all 'ovitches,' 'linskys,' and that sort of thing. No, sir, I couldn't remember one of them if I was to die for it."

"What time was it when you arrived back inside your own house?"

"Half-past three, sir. If it had not been so late I'd have come to you at once; but as it was I thought it would keep till now, sir."

"Yes. There was no necessity of haste."

"You see, I had to wait till them two women went to sleep before I thought it was safe to creep up the stairs again, and pass their dures. I could have kicked

*Major Sylvester is now the chief in Washington, but this case was before the death of Major Moore.—C. C.

myself, though, for not bein' able to understand what they were talking about."

"Well, that cannot be helped now."

"No, sir. Only if I'd had sense enough to go to the corner and telephone to you the minute that Nora told me about it, how much better it would have been. You see, I was a little too smart that time. I wanted to do it all meself and afterward hear you say how pleased you were wid me; 'and that's what I get for it."

"But I *am* pleased with you, Danny."

"Maybe so, sir. But it might have been better."

"That is true enough."

"Do you think you understand it at all, at all, sir?"

"Yes; I think I understand it very well indeed."

"Then I won't worry any more about it."

"No; but I shall want to make use of your house again to-night, Danny," replied the detective.

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER ON A DIFFICULT TRAIL.

At eleven o'clock that night the red-headed man and the tall woman came out of the house in Twenty-seventh Street together, and started away at a rapid walk without once looking behind them.

If they had done so it is doubtful if they would have seen Nick Carter, or have thought twice about him if they had.

The detective was not only on their track, but he had made himself up after a fashion that was designed to attract as little attention as possible. Besides that, he kept safely in the distance, and he had instructed Danny exactly what to do to assist him; for in the absence of both his regular assistants, Danny had been called into the case.

We need not give the details of the shadowing part of it.

Suffice it to say that the detective followed the two to Third Avenue, where they took a surface car going down-town; that then Nick had only to signal to Danny who was behind him with the motor-car.

Leaping inside they followed the electric car down-town to Chatham Square where the man and the woman left the car and turned down Division Street toward the East River; and Danny was told to take the automobile to a safe place, after which he was to return to that spot where Nick left him, and from there he was to follow certain arrowhead chalk marks that he would find upon the pavement.

If you don't happen to know this method of trailing, after a person has passed, here is the explanation:

A chalk mark is made on the pavement near the gutter, at the starting-point. It points in the direction to be taken. The person who is to be guided by them follows along in that direction until another chalk mark is discovered. A mark is never made unless there is some change in the course.

If a corner is turned, a quarter-circle is made with the chalk *before* the corner is reached, and it suggests the direction in which the others have turned. If the street is crossed, it is indicated by a straight line pointing directly across the street; and on the other side, directly opposite, there will be found another indicating-mark.

There is never a mark made unless there is some definite change in the direction.

The detective followed the pair down Division Street until finally they turned into a hallway that gave access to some apartments that were above a millinery-store.

He found a convenient place near there, and waited, for he was by no means certain that the two would remain where they were; they might still be on their way to the place of meeting.

But after half an hour he decided that the meeting was there, and a little before twelve, after adjusting false whiskers and wig, he boldly approached the door and turned the knob.

To his surprise the door was fastened, and after waiting a moment—for he had not expected this—he rapped upon it.

He waited a considerable time without receiving any answer, and this was the more surprising because he had given a signal used by the anarchists on such occasions; so he walked away from the door again to give himself time to think over this new condition.

It was fortunate that he did so, for he had barely taken up a position across the street ere he saw two other men approaching, who went directly to that same door, fitted a key to it, and entered, closing it behind them.

"So it is a key, is it?" he murmured to himself. "I wonder if it is an ordinary key, or a Yale affair?"

He looked up and down the street to be sure that he was unobserved, then crossed it again, and for the second time approached the door.

It was just an ordinary latch lock, worked by an ordinary brass key, and it required only a moment for him to work it with his picklock, after which he entered upon a hallway that was pitch-dark, and closed the door behind him.

He surmised that some one would be waiting in that hallway to intercept and to "try" any person who might enter; but in that he was mistaken.

No one obstructed his passage, and so presently he flashed his electric torch around him, discovering that not only was the hall deserted, but that it led directly back through the building to another door in the rear which was standing widely ajar.

He approached it at once, passed out into the yard beyond it, and stopped.

There was light enough there for him to see that there was no apparent means of getting out of that yard, and he had about determined that the meeting was to be held somewhere in that building through which he had just passed, when he was aware that the front door was opened again.

With a bound Nick leaped to one side and then threw himself flat upon the ground, lying as closely as he could get to the building, and hoping against hope that he would not be discovered there.

He felt that he would soon know whether the meeting was in the building or not; and also he prepared himself to put up a good fight in case he was discovered.

But it appeared as if the man who now stepped out into the yard had no thought of being seen, for he walked directly through it to the fence at the rear and opened a door that had been cut through it and which the detective had not seen in the darkness.

The fellow passed through and closed the door behind him; but he had shown the detective the way; or, at least, a part of it.

He lost no time in taking advantage of it, after making a chalk mark on the flagged path—a mark which he had no idea that Danny would ever see.

Beyond the fence was the rear entrance to another building, and here Nick was at fault again. But inside the hall he found a door that opened upon a small closet, and he resolved to wait there a while on the chance that another of the members would appear to show him the way.

If, after a short wait, nobody appeared, it would be time enough then to search the house for the place of meeting.

But he was again fortunate.

Not more than ten minutes elapsed before he saw a man come through the door in the fence, and Nick stepped into the closet and waited for him to pass.

And here was another surprise for the detective, for this last man to appear walked directly through the house and out at the door that opened upon the street.

For just an instant Nick hesitated, the idea occurring to him that this fellow might not be one of the anarchists; but a second thought told him differently, and he followed quickly to the door, first making a chalk mark on the floor of the hall and afterward another one on the step outside the door.

He could see the man who had passed through the house.

He was a hundred feet or so down the street and was walking rapidly; Nick followed.

There were several twists made before the man whom Nick was following turned at last into Roosevelt Street and presently entered the door of a Chinese laundry where a Celestial was busily engaged in ironing at the window.

Nick could see that the man said nothing at all to the Chinaman, and that the latter paid not the slightest attention to him; and he smiled understandingly.

"This is rather a shrewd dodge," he told himself while he withdrew into a dark doorway and decided to pass another short time of waiting. "Those chaps have made some sort of a dicker with the Chinaman by which they are permitted to pass through the laundry to their meeting; or more than likely the meeting is held right there in that place. I'll wait and see if another one appears."

But another one did not appear, and after making the proper marks Nick at last decided that if he wished to find out what was going on he must lose no more time.

Readers of the Nick Carter histories are aware that the detective speaks Chinese fluently, and especially the Cantonese Chinese; so as soon as Nick entered the laundry and had passed to the rear room of it, which was untenanted save for three other Mongolians who were asleep in their bunks, he called out in Chinese words to the man who was ironing at the window:

"Come here a moment," he said in the Chinaman's native dialect. "I want to ask you some questions, and I will pay you for answering them."

The Chinaman came to the rear room with amazement written on his face as plainly as it could be on the flat, expressionless face of his countrymen.

"Mandarin speak Chinese?" he demanded, smiling his coy smile which tells one nothing at all of the sentiments behind it.

"Yes," replied the detective; "and I am not a mandarin."

"What did the mandarin say?" inquired the laundryman imperturbably.

"I wish to ask you some questions," replied Nick.

"You observe that I speak your language almost as well as you do yourself, don't you?"

"Yes; mandarin speak it very well indeed."

"There is a meeting of some men somewhere in this house and I wish to attend it. I want you to tell me where it is so that I can go there."

The Chinaman shook his head emphatically.

"No meeting here," he said placidly.

By way of reply to this the detective took a five-dollar bill from his pocket and held it toward the Chinaman.

"Take that and tell me what I wish to know," he said.

The Chinaman took the bill, folded it very carefully into a surprisingly small compass and deposited it in some mysterious place beneath his shirtlike blouse; then, with the same placid smile, he announced:

"Ling Gee does not know about any meeting of men here, mandarin."

Now, if the detective had understood less of the Chinese character than he did, he would have been at fault; but he did and does understand it perfectly.

He knew that the Chinaman was under oath not to tell—*tell*, mind you—anything he knew about that meeting, but he also understood that the Chinaman would not have accepted the money and stowed it away as he had done unless there was another way in which he could convey the desired information than by word of mouth.

It was likely, moreover, that he considered, from the fact that this white man spoke his language, he would also understand what was meant when the money was accepted and put away.

A Chinaman will religiously live up to any contract he enters into. No matter how bad a character he may be, he will do that. If a Chinaman makes a contract with you he will keep it. Nick returned his smile and said:

"You have agreed not to tell anything you know about that meeting. You have agreed to deny that there is any meeting. Eh?"

The Chinaman made no reply. He still continued to smile reassuringly, however.

"But you have not agreed that you would not *show* me what I wish to find, have you?"

The smile on the Chinaman's face grew broader; but he did not move.

Nick took another five-dollar bill from his pocket and gave that into the hand of the Celestial.

"Show me the things I wish to see," he said. "After it is over you shall have as much more money—if I see well, and without danger to myself."

Without a word the Chinaman turned and opened a very narrow door that was located almost behind him, passed through and began to mount noiselessly a narrow flight of stairs that it had concealed.

Nick followed.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE ANARCHIST MEETING.

It was rather a noteworthy fact, Nick thought, that the narrow stairs up which he was so surreptitiously led, were thickly padded so that their footfalls gave forth no sound whatever; but midway up them—and it was at once evident that they ascended beyond the second story of the building to the third or fourth one—the Chinaman stopped and turned abruptly till he faced the detective.

"Mandarin not care what Chinamen do?" he asked in his own language.

"No," replied Nick. "If you mean that your countrymen smoke opium, or play fan-tan here, I promise you now and take oath that I will keep my word, that I will never tell anybody about it, or show any person the way here, and that I will not by word or sign reveal to another anything that you will show me that does not concern the things I have come here to see and hear."

It was a regular form of Chinese oath, and the Celestial bowed and smiled, well pleased.

Being uttered in his own language, and taking the form of the promise he would have required had he been left to state it himself, he was entirely satisfied.

He turned about at once and continued on his way up the stairs; and, as Nick had anticipated, there was no landing until they reached the third floor of the building.

But there they passed through another narrow door, and could see a room where there were more than a score of Chinamen engaged in gambling.

Then he led the way to another narrow door and began to ascend more padded stairs.

Presently, at the top of them, they passed into a second gambling-room, only as it happened it was located in the house adjoining the one through which they had ascended—for they had passed through the partition wall in order to enter it—and it was deserted and dark.

The Chinaman struck a match and lighted the wick

of a tiny alcohol-lamp which did not shed as much light as the flame of the match had done.

Then he pointed with his finger toward a spot in the middle of the room, where Nick could see nothing at all, and having forced the lamp into Nick's hand, blew it out.

For a moment the detective stood exactly where he was, in utter darkness; but after a moment he felt the Chinaman's hand on his arm, and with it a pressure that gently suggested that he was to get down prone upon the floor.

Then it occurred to the detective what the Chinaman had meant when he pointed toward the middle of the floor. There was doubtless a trap-door there.

He obeyed the pressure on his arm, and got down, first on his hands and knees, and then as the pressure continued, flat upon his stomach.

Then, with a suddenness that startled him, voices suddenly sounded clearly to him, proceeding from a point directly in front of him.

He reached out one hand tentatively and presently discovered that a small square, not more than four inches across it, had been removed from the flooring, and that the sound of voices had come to him from the room beneath them.

When he attempted to look down into the room below he found that it was as black as the one where he and the Chinaman were located, and he understood that a "dark" meeting of a group of anarchists was in progress.

Then the voices ceased, and Nick understood that the Chinaman had replaced the square he had raised; but before he could ask himself why, he heard the laundryman whispering close to his ear:

"One square fits into another in the door through the floor. I removed the smallest one. Outside of it there are one, two, three, four, five, six others; then the hole through the floor is big enough to drop through. You know the way back to the laundry?"

"Yes," replied the detective.

"I will wait for you there."

Then the voices ascended to Nick's ears again, and he knew that the Chinaman had opened the smallest of the traps once more; and he realized a moment later that he was alone, although he heard no sound of his guide's departure.

But now the proceedings in the room below him engaged his attention.

One of the men there was addressing the others in German and the subject matter of his remarks instantly engaged the attention of the detective.

He was saying:

"I do not think it will benefit us to wait any longer for the appearance of the detective. It is evident to me that he will not come. It is plain that he did not take the bait. It is certain that he has not fallen into the trap we laid for him so carefully. He received the letter that was sent to him. That I know personally, because I followed the boy and saw him deliver it at the house. We will proceed with the business that brings us together—the rest of it, I mean—and if he should appear later, well and good. If not, we must consider some other and better means of getting Nick Carter into our power before we separate for the night. What say you all?"

Nick realized fully then that the Chinaman, without in the least understanding the fact, had saved his life, for if he had followed out his original intention and gone to that meeting, it is certain that he would have been killed as soon as he was inside the door.

But now, thanks to his knowledge of Chinese, and the Chinese character, he was attending the anarchist meeting without actually being present; or possibly it would be more correct to say that he was present at the meeting without attending it.

He understood now that the letter was a forgery; he also understood—for the circumstance told him so as plainly as words could have done it—that Michael O'Brien was in danger; possibly he was already dead.

The message in the letter about Chicago, authenticated by the message that Michael was supposed to have sent home to his landlady to the effect that he had gone West, was sufficient evidence of that.

But the meeting below him was continuing, and he gave his entire attention to it.

"What is the first business that we shall take up?" asked the same voice that had spoken before.

"The prisoners in Washington. They must be set free," came a reply from the darkness.

"Very well. I will receive suggestions," remarked the man who seemed to be the leader.

"I suggest," said a third voice, "that the same plans we made once before be carried out now. They failed that time, not because of any discovery that was made, but because the 'instrument' we selected was blown to pieces by the very bombs he intended to use down there."

"What do I hear in reference to the suggestion?" asked the leader.

A fourth voice announced:

"I was not present at the time. I would like to hear the particulars."

"Cordova will recite them for the benefit of our brother who was not present at that time," said the leader.

Another voice began speaking.

"Madam Zenobia, whom we all revere," he said, "arranged all those plans, and she supplied us with a working diagram of the prison where our friends are confined. I have it in my possession now. Upon it there is a red cross with a circle around it, which shows the weakest section of wall in the prison building. Against that point the selected instrument who is now dead, was to hurl a powerful bomb which was designed to tear a huge hole through the wall. He was also to be supplied with two smaller bombs, one of which he was to throw into the crowd that might seek to prevent the escape, and the other was for his own protection, to use as he might see fit, later on."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Give us the rest of it, then."

"Zenobia was to prepare written directions for the instrument to follow, and was to deliver them to the instrument at the 'appointed place' the second morning following, at ten o'clock; but she sent them by the expert, who was blown to pieces with the instrument, as you all know."

"Yes."

"And of course the instructions were destroyed, also. There was nothing left that was inside that carriage when the accident occurred."

"*Was* it an accident?"

"I do not know. We call it so."

"Very well. What about the instruction?"

"I assisted Zenobia in preparing them. For security, we made two copies. I have the other one still in my possession."

"Good; but I understood you that Zenobia was to deliver the instructions. How was it that she was spared?"

"She sent the expert to keep the appointment in her place."

"Ah; do you think that those original instructions will be ample now, after so much time has passed?"

"I think they are very much better than any we could prepare ourselves; but I have a suggestion to make in connection with them."

"What is that?"

"This: One of our members who is here with us to-night has been in the past a priest of the Greek church. I would suggest that he go to Washington, and by dressing in the garb he used to wear that he manage somehow to secure an interview in the prison with Zenobia. He can then ask her if she thinks it wise to carry out the original plans, and he can get any further suggestions from her that she will make."

"All that would occasion too much delay," suggested the leader.

"On the contrary, sir, there need be no delay. We are all of one mind here. There is not one among us who is not eager to see this rescue carried out; I doubt if there is one among us who would not volunteer for the position of instrument, in this case."

There was a murmur of approval.

"We are all devoted to Zenobia, and therefore I suggest that we turn on the lights, and that we choose our instrument in the old-time manner, by drawing beans from the bag. He who draws the black bean becomes the instrument, and others will volunteer to assist him. I, for one, will volunteer now, in case I am not drawn for the greater duty."

"And I. And I. And I," came many voices from all quarters of the room.

"So, you see, we will all know who happens to be the selected instrument; we will all be in a position to assist him; and our brother, of whom I have already spoken, will be able to go at once from his interview with Zenobia to the brother who is to make use of the bombs, and relate all that has been said. Sir, I put it as a motion."

It was agreed upon without a dissenting voice; and then the man spoke again.

"Now, one moment before we turn on the lights," he said. "I would like to bring up the name of the man whose life we swore away at our last gathering."

"Do you refer to the chief of police down there?" somebody asked.

"Yes."

"Let him be blown to pieces!" cried a voice; and the others cried out together:

"Yes! Yes! Yes!"

CHAPTER V.

NICK CARTER CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

There was a moment of silence then in the room beneath the detective, and during it one might have thought the place deserted; but the order was presently given to strike the lights—which consisted, as Nick presently discovered, of two ordinary lamps with reflectors behind them.

Nick counted only fifteen persons in the room, but

there was not one among them who did not wear a wig and some sort of false beard to shield his face.

This was doubtless done, Nick thought, in order that even the Chinaman through whose laundry they were obliged to pass might not be able to recognize them afterward.

Of the fifteen persons three were women, and these wore half-masks so that nothing of the features behind them was visible.

The proceedings were carried on rapidly after the lamps were lighted.

The man whose voice proclaimed him to be the leader, and who was the very man whom Nick had followed from the house in Twenty-seventh Street, prepared the bag with the beans, and having shaken them up thoroughly he passed among his companions permitting each one to put his hand inside the bag and draw a bean.

It was the fourth man to whom he offered the bag, who drew the black bean, and he instantly announced the fact; and his voice proclaimed him to be the man who had called for an explanation of the plans because he had not been present at the other gathering when an "instrument" had been chosen.

He laughed aloud when he drew the bean and held it up so that all the others could see it.

"It appears that I got my wish, brothers," he said, smiling upon them. "I hoped that it might be I who drew the black bean. You may rely upon me. I will not fail you."

Something very like a cheer arose at this statement; that is, if exclamations which are not louder than low-spoken words could be called cheers.

"Our expert, you tell me, is dead," he said. "He was killed in the carriage with the instrument who was chosen before?"

"Yes," replied the leader, who had resumed his place upon a platform at one end of the room.

"Who, then, will supply the bombs?"

"I will do that," the leader replied again.

"When, and where?"

"I will give you my instructions presently. Now listen, all of you."

"We listen, sir," came a chorus of replies.

"My directions are as follows: Presently I will call for four volunteers to assist the brother who has been selected as the instrument. You will please give me your attention so that those who go as volunteers may know exactly what is expected of them.

"Those who are chosen will leave this city for Washington by any route they please, at any time which suits them best between now and one week from to-night, at midnight. But my orders are that each man must go singly, and if any of you chance to encounter another one on the way there, or after your arrival in Washington, you are on no account to recognize one another, save as I shall hereafter direct. Do you all agree to that?"

They did so.

"The fact that I have asked only four to volunteer for this service does not preclude others from going to Washington, to see the deed done, and to offer such aid as may be necessary. All who are here may go, if they so desire."

There was a faint clapping of hands at this.

"The next 'appointed place' that I shall name will be located there. For the ensuing week we will continue to make use of the same one that was appointed for the week just past. The new one in Washington I will whisper to you presently.

"My brother, you who are the instrument chosen for this great work, you will proceed to the capital whenever you please. Before we part to-night I will make an appointment with you for the appointed place down there, and will deliver the necessary bombs to you there, instead of here."

"Very well, sir."

"Now I will call for the four volunteers. Each man who wishes to volunteer will please stand up."

The eleven men besides himself who were in the room instantly stood erect, and the leader smiled, well pleased.

"I am proud of you," he said. "Your act shows that we are all in earnest in this matter. I will appoint the four brothers who are farthest to my left, as I stand; but I will accept all of you as extras. The women need not go."

"But if we should wish to go?" asked one of them.

"Then my orders are that you remain here."

"But——"

"Now you may all be seated again. Before two weeks from to-night, I think we will meet again and have Zenobia with us, as well as Vassili and Tomschk. Now, what is the next question that is to come before us?"

"The question of Nick Carter," replied one of the men loudly.

"I am afraid," said the leader, "that it will be impossible to devote any of our attention to him until after the other work is accomplished."

"I am of the opinion that his case should be taken up at once," insisted the man who had spoken be-

fore. "We are not due in the city of Washington before a week from to-morrow morning. Much may be accomplished in that time."

"It would have to be undertaken by a volunteer."

"Very well, sir. I will volunteer myself."

"And I," said the man who stood next to him.

"My brothers," said the leader, "you have heard what has been said. Is there any objection to the proposition?"

There was not a voice raised to reply.

"There being none, we will consider the point settled. Now, my brother, what means have you and the brother who volunteered as your assistant, to carry out the sentence of death that has already been passed upon the detective, Nick Carter?"

"I—*we* both have everything that is required, or is necessary."

"In that case I will issue no instructions. I shall give you no directions. My orders are that you accomplish the great duty that we have imposed upon you with the greatest possible expedition, and that you carry out the sentence in whatever manner and at whatever location that may seem to you to be the best adapted to your purposes."

"Thank you, sir."

"You are not, however, to forget that you must be prepared to leave New York not later than midnight one week from to-night."

"We won't forget."

Nick Carter smiled to himself grimly.

He had just heard his own death sentence pronounced, and the pronouncement was made by men who meant to carry it out; there could be no doubt of that.

They had sworn away his life, and had it not been for the intervention of the Chinaman, he would have gone to his death that night; doubtless would have been murdered ere this moment when he heard them discussing him.

But even though he had overheard their discussions, he was not much wiser regarding their real plans than if he were elsewhere, so great was the caution they exercised.

All that he knew even now was that during the coming week his life was to be attempted, probably with bombs; but just how, or when, or where, he had no means of determining. That was the situation precisely.

Just then a member of the group whose voice the detective had not heard before rose in his place and said:

"There is one more question that should come before us before we separate, sir."

"Well, and what is that?"

"It is the question of the disposition of Michael Cashel—or, as he now calls himself, Michael O'Brien."

"True," said the leader. "I had entirely forgotten him for the moment."

"What do you think, sir, should be done with him?"

"Unquestionably he should be condemned to death. But——"

"Well, sir?"

"But in consideration of the other affairs we have to dispose of, I don't see how anything can be done in his case till afterward. Do you?"

Before a reply could be made to this question, another one who had been silent rose, and said:

"It occurs to me, sir, that Zenobia is the only person who has a right to dispose of Cashel. She is related to him, I understand."

"Yes."

"And again, if I am correctly informed, we have not entirely established his treachery, or his treason. Is that true?"

"Yes; but there is little doubt that it can be established satisfactorily."

"But we should adhere to our rule and give him an opportunity to prove his innocence?"

"Yes."

"Is he not safely disposed of for the present?"

"Yes."

"Where he cannot escape?"

"Yes."

"Why not leave him there, then, wherever he is, until after our return from Washington. No doubt Zenobia will come back here with us and take charge."

"The only difficulty about that, my brother, exists in the fact that one of us will have to remain behind, to feed him. If you had not mentioned his name, I should have forgotten about him entirely, and he would have been left to starve." He looked about him for a moment in silence, and then added: "Perhaps it is the sense of this meeting that such might be a good way to dispose of the question. What say you?"

"No," replied the man who was on his feet, "I do not think we should do that. It would not be living up to the rule."

"That's so," said another.

"Very well, then," said the leader, "who is prepared to volunteer to remain here and feed him?"

There was no reply to this question, and for a mo-

ment it seemed as if Michael must be left to starve; but one of the three women spoke up.

"Since you will not permit us to accompany you to Washington," she said, "may we not perform that duty in the absence of the others?"

There was a murmur of approval at this suggestion.

The leader was silent for a moment. Then he said:

"Very well, let it be so arranged. My sister, if you will come here I will deliver your instructions in a whisper. The man has food and water, such as it is, sufficient to last him until to-morrow night, but no longer. Now listen."

Then he began whispering to her so that the detective could not hear a word, although he knew that the leader was telling her where Michael was confined.

CHAPTER VI.

WHERE DANNY WENT TO SLEEP.

The whispered instructions to the woman occupied fully ten minutes during which she nodded her head repeatedly as if she understood thoroughly what was required of her.

How Nick did wish that he could see her face, but the half-mask she wore entirely concealed it. It was possible, of course, that she might be the woman who had come from the house in Twenty-seventh Street, but there were two women there who did not come from that house, and so there were two chances to one against such a hope on the detective's part.

But when presently she returned to her seat, she began at once a whispered conversation with her two companions, so it was evident that all three of them were to act.

That Michael was in a dangerous predicament, Nick realized, but that he would be fed and cared for during the greater part of two weeks more, he also knew.

Satisfied now that he had heard all that it was important he should know, or, at least, all that he could learn there, he determined upon a course that had not occurred to him until that instant.

These men were all equally guilty of plotting murder; they had sworn away the lives of three individuals since Nick had been listening; and they had plotted other acts which might well endanger the lives of many others.

The detective felt that he would like to round up the entire group if that could be made possible; and now the inspiration came to him concerning how it might be done.

He permitted himself one last careful look at the leader of the group; then he dropped the square piece into place in the floor and rose to his feet producing his electric torch as he did so, and disdaining the little alcohol affair that the Chinaman had given to him.

The room was an exact counterpart of the one where he had seen the Chinamen engaged in gambling, but Nick was not interested in that fact; all he desired was to find his way out of it.

He glanced at his watch and discovered that it was almost three o'clock in the morning. Then he opened the narrow door, descended the still narrower stairs to the next floor and passed the gambling-room through which he had passed two hours earlier.

The Chinamen were still there, and Nick passed on, thence down the long flight of stairs to the ground floor.

But at the narrow door that would admit him to the laundry, he hesitated.

He asked himself the question: "What if the anarchists were already leaving their meeting-place and he should encounter one of them in the laundry?"

Plainly such a thing would not do at all. It would not only endanger the chances of his own success in what he had undertaken, but it would imperil the life of the Chinaman who had helped him, and also of all those Chinamen who were engaged in play on the upper floor. Men as desperate as those anarchists were not to be trifled with.

Finally, after considerable hesitation, he opened the door by just a crack; then a little wider, and finally, satisfied that no one was stirring in the laundry, he thrust his head out through the opening and called softly:

"Ling Gee!"

There was the shuffling of grass toe-slippers along the floor and in a moment the moon-face of the laundryman appeared, blandly smiling.

The detective addressed him quickly and rapidly.

"Those men are coming down in a moment," he said. "They may have started already; but I must talk to you if possible before they get here. I want——"

The Chinaman made a warning gesture, holding up one finger to command silence. Then with a quick motion he closed the narrow door in Nick's face, and the detective could hear a bolt shot into place, and he knew that he had been temporarily fastened in.

Of course he could easily have kicked the door open, but he had no thought of doing that; and so he had to be content to sit down on the narrow stairs and wait until Ling Gee believed it safe to open the door again.

To Nick Carter the time thus passed seemed interminable; in reality it was quite half an hour; and during it Nick could hear the tread of feet as big and heavy men passed the door, one at a time and at intervals, on their way out from the place of meeting.

There was no help for it, however. He could not now carry out the scheme he had planned, which had been to borrow a Chinaman's suit of the Celestial, and by staining his face, to appear to be one of the laundrymen; and he had hoped to be able in that way to shadow the leader to his home.

At the end of half an hour Ling Gee unlocked the door and threw it open.

"All gone," he said laconically, in his own language.

"Are you sure?" asked Nick.

"Yes. I counted them. I always count them, one, two, three, four, and so on. This time there were twelve men and three women."

"Correct," said the detective, who still remained concealed in the stairway. "Do you suppose that any of them will hang around and watch? Eh?"

"No fear of that. You can come out now. We will draw the curtain and sit in the rear room. Nobody can see us from the street."

The detective stepped outside and closed the door after him.

"What was it that the mandarin wished to say to Chinaman?" asked Ling Gee then, providing Nick with a chair, and pouring him a cup of tea.

Nick told him, and the Chinaman laughed outright. Then he pointed toward the bunks where, when Nick first entered the place, he had seen three Chinamen sleeping.

Nick did not understand, for there were curtains half-drawn in front of the bunks, and below where they extended it looked as if the men were still sleeping there.

"What do you mean?" he asked Ling Gee.

"Go look," said the Chinaman.

Nick did so, pulling the curtains aside, and discovering that there was not a sign of a Chinaman in any of them.

He turned inquiringly toward his Celestial friend and the latter laughed again.

"You speak my language as if you born in China," he said. "You have been much in China. I know that. It is true, mandarin?"

"Yes."

"You understand China ways. You are good to me. You come here and give me ten dollars, and you promise me ten more dollars when you come downstairs again. That is so?"

"Yes."

"Well, Ling Gee wish to earn it. Ling Gee wish to do mandarin a favor. But Ling Gee cannot talk; he has promised not to do so. Understand?"

"Yes."

"Ling Gee have three men asleep here in bunks; all new men. Other three that I had here for long time, gone away; gone back to China yesterday. Three new men came here from California to work for Ling Gee yesterday. Understand?"

"Yes."

"Other three men who have gone to China also promise not to talk, but three men who come here last to work not promise. Understand?"

Nick was beginning to understand better, and said so.

"I woke three Chinamen up a hour ago, and sent them outside. I told them what to do. You wait. Understand?"

"I think so; I hope I do. You have sent them to——"

"You wait. Ling Gee cannot talk. Other men can talk. Ling Gee can listen to see that the talk is right. I know what you want. You wait. You see. You find out. Understand?"

"Yes."

The Chinaman was silent for a time after that, while he sipped his tea from time to time. At last, however, he said:

"You got a friend? Young man? Almost a boy? Ilish?" He tried to pronounce the last word in English.

"Yes," said the detective, instantly thinking of Danny, and wondering if the lad had succeeded in tracing him through that other house and then around to this laundry.

"He has been here," said Ling Gee, speaking in Chinese again.

"Is that so? When?"

"Long time ago; an hour, maybe."

"Where is he now?"

"Is he your friend?" the Chinaman asked again.

"He is my servant. He drives my automobile," replied the detective.

"Ah; I said that you were a mandarin. I know."

Nick's reply to this statement was to remove a portion of his disguise for the benefit of the Chinaman, whom he had begun to like and trust. Then he asked:

"Where is he? Did he go away again?"

"He is asleep," said the Chinaman, grinning.

"Asleep?" exclaimed Nick.

"Yes. I put him to sleep. He insisted that you were here, mandarin. He said he found a mark outside that said you were here, and that if you had gone out again there would have been another mark, so I told him that you had just gone out for little minute, and would soon be back again. He was determined to find out, and would have torn up the whole place if I had not put him to sleep."

"How did you do it, Ling Gee?"

"Cup of tea; little green pill inside; melt; no taste; sleep beautiful in three minutes. Sleep four, five, six hours. Wake up fine. Not like opium. No harm at all. You believe me?"

"Yes."

"I take care of him. You write letter before you go away and when he wake up I give it to him. Then he read it and say all right."

"He will be as mad as a hornet, Ling Gee."

"Not if you write letter and explain to him. If I had not put him to sleep he would have spoiled everything; spoiled what you wanted to do; spoiled my business, and maybe those—no, I cannot talk, but maybe somebody kill me. Understand?"

"Yes. You did perfectly well. I see that I will have to give Danny implicit instructions about what *not* to do the next time I take him out."

"His name Danny?"

"Yes."

"I remember. I tell him you say to me to call him Danny."

"Good. Now I wonder where he left the automobile?"

"I don't know. He said nothing to me about that."

"Well, it is probably safe until he goes after it. He would not leave it where it was not safe. Now give me another cup of fresh tea, Ling Gee, and don't put any green pills in it, will you?"

"No," replied the Chinaman, grinning. "And you not forget that other ten dollars?"

"No, I won't forget it. If those three men of yours bring me back some good news I am going to make it twenty-five."

"Ling Gee can never work hard enough for you, to earn all that, mandarin."

"Well, you can try; for I begin to think that there is something else that you can do for me. Those men have got a prisoner concealed somewhere, and I want to find him. Perhaps you can aid me."

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THREE CHINAMEN DISCOVERED.

"Maybe mandarin tell Ling Gee about that prisoner," said the Chinaman with one of his sly smiles; and forthwith the detective gave a clear description of Michael O'Brien and he closed what he had to say with this statement:

"On Saturday, until the middle of the day or later the man was in Philadelphia. He was certainly at his boarding-house in the morning and left there to go to his work. But some time during the day the men whom I am now pursuing contrived to get him into their power. I know that he is their prisoner now, for I have heard them talking about it. But I do not know where he is confined save that he has been brought to New York and is now somewhere in this city. Confound it all, Ling Gee, I wish you were not under promise not to talk about the men who come here, for I think you could tell me a lot I want to know."

"You wait," was the laconic reply to that statement. Then: "Maybe mandarin tired and like to rest till three men come back; eh?"

"Yes; I think I would like to take a little rest, as long as I might just as well do it as not," replied the detective.

The Chinaman disappeared for a moment, but presently returned with clean blankets, and he soon had the detective arranged so comfortable that he dropped asleep almost at once; nor did he awaken again until he felt a light touch against his shoulder, and started up to see the smiling moon-face of the Chinaman bending over him.

"Three men here," was all he said, and Nick started wide-awake instantly, to discover that there were now four Chinamen in the room, three of whom were gazing stolidly upon him while Ling Gee stood smilingly in the rear.

"You ask questions; they answer," he said to Nick.

The detective selected the one who was nearest to him, and asked:

"What is your name?" (Of course he spoke in Chinese.)

"Wu Sung," was the reply.

"Did you follow one of the men who were at the meeting up-stairs to-night?"

"Yes."

"Can you tell me which one it was so that I will understand you and recognize him? Remember that I saw them all to-night—or, rather, last night, for it is now morning—and that I might be able to recognize a good description."

"I followed the man who make the contract with Ling Gee, to use the room up-stairs for the meetings. We thought him the mandarin who rules the others."

"Describe him to me."

"Very red hair; very red whiskers all around face; hair and whiskers do not grow on the man; grew on somebody else long ago. Man very short; not so tall as I am. He came here with a woman, so tall." He held his hand in the air to indicate a tall woman. "Went away with the tall woman, too. Went to house up-town, but did not go inside. Woman went inside and he came away again; then——"

"Wait a moment. Was the street Twenty-seventh?"

"Not know. Will show mandarin the house when ready to see it. Not know name of street. I do not understand."

"Well, where did he go after he left that house and the woman?"

"He go to another house long distance away where he open door with a key and go inside. I wait till daylight and he not come out again. Then I return here."

"You can show me that house, also?"

"Yes."

"Is it anywhere near this part of the city? Was it a long distance from that house to this one when you returned?"

"No. Walk there in half an hour."

"Good. When we get through here we will walk around there. Is that all the information you have at present?"

"Yes. That's all, mandarin."

Nick directed his attention to the second Chinaman.

"What is your name?" he began.

"Chang Fing."

"You heard me question Wu Sung; tell me who it was you followed, and why you selected him in preference to others."

"I followed man with long black hair and curls on shoulders; big whiskers, very black like Chinaman's hair, only all curly. I selected him to follow because——"

"Never mind why. You could not have made a better selection. He is one of the men I want to know more about." And indeed he was, for Nick had recognized from the description the man who had been selected as the instrument to carry out the decree. "Where did he go after he left here?"

"Down on East Side of city; no, up on East Side from here; Houston Street."

"Yes. Well?"

"Saloon there. Man opened front door of saloon with key and went inside. He left the door open and raised the curtains, for it was past daylight. Man came along and went inside for a drink and the man I followed served him. He the proprietor. I made marks on this paper like the number on the window. You see. I could not copy the name."

"You have done very well indeed, Chang Fing," said the detective; and he turned to the third Chinaman.

"My name Li Hung," remarked that individual before Nick spoke, and he said it in very good English, being evidently proud of his ability to talk in that tongue.

"Good," said the detective, humoring him. "What have you got to tell me?"

"Me folly man allee same giant; so big; so wide;" and he indicated what he meant by using his hands graphically. Nick had no difficulty in understanding that he was describing the individual who had volunteered to kill Nick Carter within the week.

He was greatly surprised that these Chinamen should have made their selections so well, for of all the men who had attended that meeting they had chosen the very three he would have pointed out to them had the opportunity been afforded him.

"You speak English rather well, Li," said the detective.

"Ye'. Me been in Amelica long time. In San Flisco, in Chicago, then this place."

"Where did your man go?"

"Brooklyn."

"What part of Brooklyn?"

"Him closs South Ferry, walk up Atlantic Avenue; go into little tailor-shop top side of bird-store; up-stairs one time. See?"

"Yes."

"Him tailor. Have funny name. Me make copy. Mebby you lead it allee same."

He gave a slip of paper into the hand of the detective, and Nick read there in very fair imitation of what had doubtless been the sign over the tailor's door, the name—CHRIS BERGER.

Underneath the name the Chinaman had also copied the number that was on the door.

Such was the information that the three Chinamen had to give him, but Nick felt that he had been especially fortunate in obtaining so much.

It was true that he had not discovered anything about the locality where Michael was a prisoner; but he had succeeded in discovering the name and address of the man who had sworn his own life away; he had found out where the man who had been selected as the "instrument" made his headquarters, and Wu Sing could conduct him to the home of the leader of the anarchist group.

Altogether, he felt that he had accomplished a very good night's work.

"I will ask each of you the same question now," he said to all three of the Chinamen. "Did any of the men who were followed suspect the fact?"

But he was assured with many protestations that not one of them had been suspected at all; and so he drew another bill from his pocket—a larger one this time—and passing it to Ling Gee he said to him:

"You must give each of these men five dollars for what they have done for me. And now, before I go I want to know what you meant when you said 'Wait,' at the time I referred to the prisoner, before I went to sleep."

Ling Gee pointed toward Li Hung and replied:

"You ask him that queston, mandarin."

But, as before, Nick did not have to ask the question. Li Hung seemed eager to talk, and he appeared to know what it was that the detective wished him to talk about, for he began at once. Li Hung was the Chinaman who spoke English, it will be remembered.

"Me know what mandarin want. Ling Gee tell me all about it. Ling Gee no can talk because Ling Gee make plomise not say talkee-talk 'bout things. You savvy?"

"Yes," replied Nick, grinning.

"Me come to this place flom city wiv long name two days ago—what you call Satulday. You savvy Satulday?"

"Yes."

"Me come on tlain—choo, choo; sit in smoking-place. One, two, flee men in two seats flont of me. Seats flace each othel; savvy?"

"Yes."

"One man take up all one seat; him lay down allee same sick like blaze. Sleep allee time. Dlunk, the othels tell tlain mandarin; but him no dlunk. Me know better. Him dlugged, allee same gleen pill—hasheesh. You savvy hasheesh?"

"Yes. I know what you mean," replied the detective. "Can you describe the sick man?"

"Ilish. Big; stlong; fine. Othel men call him Michael."

"By Jove, my man, you came here on the right train that time. Go on, tell me all you know."

"Not know much more, mandarin. But one of the two men wiv him, same man Wu Sung folly flom this place. Him not look same but him voice same. Me swear to that, mandarin. Me listened to voice then; me listened to same voice last night in this place. Man not look same, but voice allee same."

"Tell me how he looked while he was on the train. Describe him as he appeared there."

"Him so tall; not so tall as I am, but much wide—so. Savvy?"

"Yes. Short and broad; thick-set."

"Ye'. Hair like candy you pullee-pull in window. No whiskel on flace. Big eyes; stick out; so; boo! Savvy?"

"Yes."

"When got this city, took wagon, allee same hack. Dlove 'way. That's all."

"You did not follow?"

"No."

"You don't know where they went or anything more about them than you have already told me?"

"That's all, mandarin."

"But you think you can find out for me where they took the sick man?"

"Ye'. Me think so."

"Very well, you find out. I will give you three days to do it, and I will pay you well if you succeed."

"Me find. Mebby one, mebby two, mebby thlee days; but me find."

"Good! Now, Ling Gee," the detective added, turning his attention to the proprietor of the laundry, "I have got something for you to do that will not interfere with your promises."

CHAPTER VIII.

NICK INTERVIEWS THE "INSTRUMENT."

The thing that Nick Carter had in mind for Ling Gee to do for him was to provide him with the neces-

sary articles for making himself up as a Chinaman, for he had determined upon a method of operation, at least, for a time, which he believed would be extremely advantageous.

The consequence of it was that when he finally left the laundry of Ling Gee, he wore the best suit of clothing that belonged to that worthy, and it was a fine one.

Inasmuch as the detective was never without his small make-up box, it did not take him long to transform his face and features into a perfect representation of a Chinaman, and he did it so well that all four of the Chinamen who watched the operation clapped their hands in glee and assured him that even their own countrymen would not know the difference, particularly as he spoke the language so well.

One of the men was dispatched to Chinatown to purchase a false queue; and, in short, not the smallest detail was neglected in the make-up to render it perfect.

Nick adopted the dress of a well-to-do Chinese merchant instead of an ordinary laundryman because arrayed in that style he would be able to penetrate almost anywhere he cared to go. He would not be ordered out as would have been the case had he dressed commonly.

It was early in the afternoon when he finally left the place having made an appointment with Wu Sing to meet him that night and be shown the house where the leader lived, or, at least, the one to which Wu had followed him.

But now the detective had other "fish to fry," as we shall presently discover.

Before he left the laundry he wrote two notes. One of these was to Danny, who still slept, although it was high time he should have awakened. But Ling assured the detective that it was all the better for him to sleep a long time; he would feel all right when he awoke.

The other letter was to Joseph, Nick's valet, footman, and general man servant.

In that letter he directed Joseph to close up the house and go into the country to visit his brother for a week and to send the other servant away for the same length of time. He believed that if the house had the appearance of being deserted, these dynamiters would not attack it. He had no desire to have his front steps blown to atoms by one of their bombs if it could be avoided, and he considered this the best means of avoiding it.

As for himself, he had determined that he would not again return to his own home until after he had rounded up these law-breakers; and he resolved that he would do it so thoroughly this time that their activities would be ended for some time to come.

He smiled to himself as he walked away from the laundry where so much had occurred; and he was thinking:

"I have been practising the profession of a detective for a long time, but this is the very first experience I have had in using Chinamen for assistants; and lo! I have four of them; and mighty good ones they promise to be, too."

His first destination was the saloon in East Houston Street; the place to which Chang Fing had followed the big man who had been made the "instrument" of the group for the consummation of their plot against the chief of police of Washington, and the prison where their friends were confined.

He found the saloon without difficulty, and he entered it with the same air that any customer might have used.

The detective was perfectly aware that in the costume he wore he could have gone into the café at the Waldorf or at any other of the first-class hotels without question; but he also knew that he would be regarded curiously down here on the East Side where a Chinaman was considered only a "chink" no matter what he wore or how well cared-for he appeared to be.

But that was what he desired. He wished to attract attention, and to draw comment. He wanted an opportunity to talk and to listen to others talk, too.

He entered the place at a fortunate moment, for it so happened that the morning bartender was just in the act of removing his apron to go to his dinner, the proprietor having just arrived to relieve him—and there was not a customer in the place save himself.

As the proprietor stepped toward him Nick could see that it had been the man's first intention to say something disrespectful; doubtless he might even have ordered him from the place; but the man instantly saw the elegance of Nick's apparel, and he also met the detective's eyes as the latter came up to the bar and remarked pleasantly, and in as perfect English as Nick would have used under any circumstances:

"How do you do, sir? You do not object to serving a Chinaman, I hope?"

"Certainly not; not a Chinese gentleman," was the reply, spoken in as good English as the detective had used.

Nick gave his order for a glass of very light Hungarian white wine which he felt certain could be found there. His only desire in going there at all at that time was to obtain a good look at the proprietor of the place so he would know him anywhere and under all circumstances, a second time; for at the meeting the preceding night he had only seen him when the wig and beard concealed his features, and when old and baggy clothing covered his powerful figure.

He was a magnificent specimen of physical manhood who faced Nick Carter across the bar now—a man rather taller than his fellows, broad of shoulders, deep of chest, quick of motion, lithe and graceful, and not above thirty years of age; the last man who, from appearances, one would select as an anarchist. We will continue to refer to him as the "instrument," for it is not necessary to make use of the name that was above the outer door. The name is still there and the use of it in this connection might injure the business of an entirely innocent party.

"You speak English pretty well for a Chinaman," said the man behind the bar, as he filled the order. "I have noticed that most of them get their R's and L's all mixed up."

"Oh, yes. I speak it perfectly, I am told. You, I imagine, are a Hungarian; but you also use the English language as well as I do. It is not more strange in your case than in mine, do you think?"

"No."

"Will you join me in a glass of this wine, sir?"

"Thank you." He poured himself a glass of the wine. "It is not often that a Chinaman enters here."

"Would you serve them if they did so?"

"Sure. Why not? I have never seen anything objectionable about them. They are quiet. They mind their own business. They are never quarrelsome. I have been told that they are clean. They always pay as they go. Sure, I'd serve them. What is your business, if I may ask?"

"Oh, I have many businesses, sir. I go from one place to another, looking after the interests I have in various things," replied Nick evasively.

"I see; you are a capitalist. I suppose you control a lot of those fellows; eh?"

"I control a few—at present," replied Nick, smiling, and thinking of the four who were now working in his interests.

"Well if you are this way again, look in and see me."

"Thank you," said Nick. "Are you always here?"

"From one o'clock in the day till one at night usually. Next week I shall not be here."

"No?"

"I am going away Saturday; but I will be here till midnight next Saturday night."

"I wonder," said the detective, after a short pause, "if you could provide me with a sheet of paper and an envelope, so that I could write a short letter before I leave here? I find that I have neglected to attend to something that needs attention at once."

"Certainly. Step inside that little private office at the end of the bar;" and he led the way, and having placed paper and envelopes which bore his own name and address on the desk in front of the detective, he returned to the bar to wait upon a customer who had just entered.

Nick seated himself at the desk and wrote rapidly, addressing his letter to Captain McCafferty at police headquarters. He wrote:

"My Dear Captain:

"Will you do me the favor to make special note of the name and address at the top of this paper? The proprietor of that name and address happens to be an anarchist of the worst and most dangerous type. I attended last night a secret meeting—the kind that is called a 'dark' meeting—of the group to which he belongs and was present, although they had no idea that I was, when this man was selected as the 'instrument' to carry out a decree that had been passed. I will explain that more fully when I can see you; but the thing I wish you to do for me now is to send two men here with orders to work together, one relieving the other when necessary, and direct them not to lose sight of this man for a moment between now and his departure for the city of Washington. I will see you before that time comes, and will post you fully. Please put on the best men you can, for this fellow is as smart as they make them."

He signed the letter with his own name, and having addressed it and affixed a stamp, put it in an inside pocket ready to post when he should go out.

He was attracted at that moment by a low-toned conversation that was going on between the proprietor of the place and the customer he was serving.

They were conversing in Magyar, which is Hungarian, and the first words that the detective caught made him quickly draw a second sheet of paper toward him and pretend to be still engaged in writing.

"Well, at all events," the man in front of the bar was saying in Hungarian, "Chris,"—Nick knew instantly that the man was referring to Chris Berger, the tailor, and the one who had volunteered to kill the

detective before the week was out—"told me this morning that he would have his work done before many days. He assured me that he would be ready to leave for Washington before the end of the week, and that when he announced himself as ready, we would already have heard of his success at his duty. That detec——"

"Hush!"

"What's the matter? You don't expect that the man in there understands us, do you?"

"No; but he understands English and speaks it as well as I do. It might be that he also understands the Magyar."

"It isn't likely. When are you going away?"

"Saturday midnight."

"Who will you leave in charge of the place?"

"My wife."

"And if you should never return? If you should be killed in carrying out the decree——"

"I have made my will. Everything is in readiness."

"That is well. Do you wish that you did not have it to do?"

"Why should I wish that? I drew the black bean. It is the will of the group. I am the instrument."

"I know; but you have a wife, and——"

"I considered all that when I joined the group."

"You have not told her about what you are expected to do?"

"No; certainly not."

"And if you do not return—what shall she be told?"

"Nothing. I will have disappeared, that is all. After a time, when six months or more have passed, she can be told that I am dead, and my will probated. But I will leave full directions about all that."

And Nick Carter was thinking: "That is how the innocent are made to suffer."

CHAPTER IX.

PIERRE LEGARDE, FRENCH DETECTIVE.

When the detective left the Hungarian saloon he went by the elevated train directly to South Ferry, where he crossed and walked up the avenue until he arrived at the bird-store over which was the tailor-shop presided over by Chris Berger, the man who had sworn away his—Nick Carter's—life.

But he devoted only a glance to the place in passing, for he continued on until he found a dry-goods store which he entered, and, as before, his appearance secured him immediate attention.

He purchased a very gorgeous piece of purple silk, some wadding and other materials, and with these packed in a bundle he betook himself again in the direction of the bird-store.

But this time he mounted without hesitation the stairs that ascended to the upper floor beside it, and presently tapped against the door which bore the legend "CHRIS BERGER, Custom Tailor."

Then, having tapped, he pushed the door open and entered, to discover, seated tailor-fashion upon a well-worn bench, the huge and somewhat beefy figure of the bomb-thrower.

The man looked up and scowled at his customer. It was evident that he did not like the appearance of a Chinaman; and he blurted out in broken English:

"Mebby you vas got in de wrong blace, ain't it?"

"Oh, no, I think not," replied Nick, stepping briskly forward. "You are Herr Berger, are you not?"

"Dot's my name, sure; but I don't know no Chinamans. I don'd vork for dem already, neider."

"But I was told that you were a tailor. See here." He undid the bundle and exhibited the roll of silk he had purchased. "I wish you to make me a coat, cut after the pattern of the one I now wear. I will pay you well if you will make it for me and do a good job, and you shall have half of the pay in advance. Is not that fair?"

"Ja. It is fair enough. Vot you vant, hey? Like dot von you haf on already?"

"Yes."

"Ven you vant him, hey?"

"Oh, I am in no hurry."

"Vell, den I take de order; but you cannot haf him before—let me see! No, I cannot take de order."

"Why not?"

"I vill haf no time dis veek; next veek I be not here; I vas gone avay next week, und I could not make him till de veek after dot. So you see——"

"Oh, that will do very well indeed. I shall not require the coat until after that."

"No? Vell, den, mebby I take de order. Say, vere you learn to speak de langvidge so vell, hey?"

"I suppose I learned it in the same place you did."

"You vas learn it mooch better than I did already, then. Vot your name, hey?"

"Foo Chung Liang. Do you think you can remember that?"

"No. I write him down. Mebby you write him for me."

"Yes."

"Vere you lif, hey? Write that down, too."

"I will write down an address to which you can send the coat, or deliver it when it is finished, but it is not where I live, for you would not care to deliver it to me there. But at this address I will write down for you, I have a friend—I will also write his name under my own—and you can deliver the goods to him. I think perhaps I had better pay you the entire sum in advance, so there will be no trouble about your getting your money. Will that be entirely satisfactory, Mister Berger?"

"Yah. De coat got to be made like dot von, hey? Him haf to be quilted, hey? I charge you twelf tollars for dot already. You pay me dot und I make de coat; oderyise, nein."

By way of reply Nick passed twelve dollars to the tailor at once, and the man left his bench and crossed the room toward an old desk.

"I gif you von receipt," he said, seating himself. "Vot is dot name? Hey?"

Nick passed over the book in which he had not only written down the name he had given, but also the name and address of Ling Gee; and then he stepped a trifle to the rear and watched the man narrowly.

As he had more than half-expected the tailor started to his feet suddenly, for whether or not the name of Ling Gee meant anything to him, the address certainly did. He turned a scowling face toward the detective, who was smiling, and exclaimed:

"You lif dere?"

"No; my friend to whom I wish you to deliver the coat when it is finished lives there."

"You been dere? Hey?"

"I am going there this evening to tell him about the coat, and that it will be delivered to him when you have made it. Why do you ask?"

"I know dot place."

"Oh! You do, eh?"

"Yah. It iss a laundry, already."

"Yes; I believe so."

"Ven you go dere? To-night? Hey?"

"Yes."

The anarchist tailor was plainly troubled; but he returned to his chair and wrote out the receipt for the twelve dollars, in German script.

"What does this say?" asked Nick, pretending not to understand it.

"Dot say dot I haf receifed twelf tollars from you for making de coat vich I promise to deliver as you told me, in tree veeks or less, if I am alife. Dot's all."

"You are not expecting to die before that time, are you, Mister Berger?"

"Von never can tell about dot."

"You are a strong-looking man."

"Yah. Dot iss so; but if I am tead I cannot delifer de goods; no?"

"No. I suppose not."

"Vell, if I am lifing, I bring you de coat; if I am tead, you lose your twelf tollars. Vas you villing to take de chance, hey?"

"Certainly."

"Now I measure you already."

And Nick permitted him to pass the tape over his body, although for a coat of that pattern there seemed not much need of measurements.

He left the tailor-shop soon after that, having accomplished his design of seeing and talking with Berger. Then he crossed the ferry again to New York and seeking a quiet hotel where he knew he would be received in his present costume, he dispatched a messenger with a letter addressed to one Pierre Legarde to come as soon as possible to the hotel and inquire for a Chinaman named Foo Chung Liang.

Within an hour the Frenchman was there, and Nick had him up-stairs in the room that had been assigned to him.

Legarde was a French detective who had gotten into difficulties in his own country, and had been hiding in New York for some time past. Nick knew, because he had seen him on the street, recognized him, and followed him to his stopping-place.

That the Frenchman was badly frightened Nick knew the moment he appeared. It was evident that he had not in the least expected to see a Chinaman, although the letter had said so; but he had supposed that it would be another French detective in disguise.

Nick's disguise was so perfect, however, that the man did not know what to make of him at all, and he stood staring while he waited for the supposed Chinaman to address him.

"Legarde," said Nick, speaking in French, "I suppose you are wondering how it happens that a Chinaman, visiting this country, should happen to know you at all, but most of all how he should happen to know your hiding-place in New York; eh?"

"Yes," replied the Frenchman. "I do not understand it. I'll tell you now, Monsieur Chinaman, that I am not a safe person to know too much about. I have a sting which I sometimes make use of, if I am pressed too hard."

"Oh, I know all about that. It was the too quick

use of that same sting which is responsible for your presence in New York at the present moment. The chief, over in Paris, might like to know about your present address; no?"

The Frenchman smiled, not a pleasant smile, either, and moved his chair so that he was between Nick and the door.

"That is why I came at once in response to your message," he said significantly. "I asked at the desk if you were alone, and was told that you were. I think that we will understand each other perfectly before you leave this room again."

"Quite right," replied Nick. "I think we will. I sent for you because I have use for the services you so well know how to render."

"Maybe you did and again maybe you did not. But before we discuss that, I would like to understand how it happens that you know me at all, and also how you knew of my present address. Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me."

"I knew you first in Paris, Legarde. Not very long ago I saw you on the street here and followed you to the place where you are living. I suppose you are living under an assumed name there, but I did not bother to ascertain that point. I surmised that the use of your own name on the envelope would secure your attention."

"It did."

"Legarde, haven't you guessed who I am?"

"No. I haven't tried very hard."

"Try, then."

"What's the use? If you are not a Chinaman, then your make-up is the best I ever saw. If you are, I don't much care for particulars."

"I am Nick Carter."

"What?" The Frenchman bounded to his feet, but Nick smilingly motioned to him to resume it.

"It is true," he said, still smiling.

"Then I suppose I am done for."

"Not at all. Not at all," Nick reassured him.

"Do you mean that you have not been requested to find me?"

"Yes."

"Then why did you send for me?"

"Because I want you to do some work for me."

"Detective work?"

"Yes. Your stronghold. Shadow work."

"You don't intend to betray me to the people in Paris?"

"No; if I had had any such intention I could have done it weeks ago, Legarde."

"What is it that you wish me to do?"

"First I require the assurance that you will serve me faithfully."

"Since you have said that you will not betray me, I will devote every energy I've got to your service, monsieur. You may be assured of that. Indeed, if I had dared to do so I would have applied to you long ago for work, for my funds are getting low. Only tell me what it is that you wish me to do, and if faithful service can perform it, it shall be done."

"All right, Legarde. Now listen to me."

CHAPTER X.

TRAILING THE LEADER.

Nick Carter then described in detail all the particulars of the case with which we are already familiar; and at the conclusion he said:

"Now, Legarde, your instructions are as follows:

"You will go at once to the tailor-shop in Brooklyn, the address of which I have given you. You will make any excuse you please to enter the shop and obtain a good look at the man Berger, whom I have described to you so that you cannot mistake him."

"Yes."

"From that time on you are not to lose sight of him. Ultimately he will go to Washington, and you must go with him."

"I will."

"Before he goes, as I have already explained, it is likely that he may attempt to blow up the front steps of my house, although I hardly think so since he will have no sight of me at all, and I am the object of his designs; not my house."

"I understand."

"I wish you to give particular attention to any persons he talks with and to retain a mental picture of all of them."

"I can do more than that; I can sketch their faces on paper, or take a snap-shot with a little camera I carry about with me, the lens of which is in this button of my coat."

"Very well, do that. His own, too."

"I will."

"Follow him to Washington, and do the same thing with any person he talks with while he is there."

"Yes."

"Find out if you can where the people he talks with are staying, down there."

"Sure."

"You will doubtless see me from time to time, in one place and another, for I shall continue to wear this disguise, I think, until this case is finished."

"You could not improve upon it."

"Keep your report written up to time, so that whenever you do see me you will have it ready to pass into my hands. You will be able to find a way to accomplish that."

"Easily."

"It is my purpose to let these people work out their plots almost to the point of entire success. I do not wish to interfere with their plans until the very last moment; just soon enough to prevent the actual use of the bombs, but no sooner."

"I understand. Yes."

"I wish, this time, to take them red-handed if possible, *and I want them all.*"

"I think you will get them, all right."

"So do I; but I don't want anything left undone that can be completed to make it sure."

"You may rely upon me to do my utmost."

"I believe that. Have you your wardrobe here in this country with you, for disguises?"

"No; only a very small part of it; but enough, I think, for this affair."

"I will supply you well with funds, and you can purchase what you require; only I shall expect an expense account from you."

"To be sure, monsieur."

"And I will pay you well for your services; how well depends upon yourself."

"I will earn all you care to pay me in that case, monsieur."

"See to it that you do so. Now, do you regard yourself as in any immediate danger of arrest for what you did in Paris?"

"No, I don't think so. Since you have not been communicated with from there about me I rather fancy that they are letting me alone. I was not really to blame for what happened, although all the appearances of the affair were against me. I——"

"Never mind about that. If you carry out this affair of mine faithfully and well, I will make it my duty to see if things can be straightened up for you; and at all events, as long as you are faithful and efficient, I can find plenty of employment for you."

"I do not know how to thank you, monsieur."

"You can do it by doing your duty."

"May I ask, monsieur, when you expect to go to Washington yourself?"

"I shall go there when the leader of the group goes there. I have selected him as my own personal prey."

"But you won't be able to follow him in that disguise, will you, monsieur?"

"Oh, he will not be lost sight of, Legarde. By the way, if in the pursuit of your work you happen to observe other Chinamen, not so well dressed as I am now, you are not to pay any attention to such a person or persons. Understand that?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"It is possible that you may encounter such; and again it is not likely. But remember."

"I think I understand you."

The detective gave Legarde a roll of money, and then he said to him:

"I think now that it is time for you to get about your duties. It is getting late in the afternoon and Berger may leave his tailor-shop at any moment. Get over there as quickly as possible."

"All right. Shall you remain at this hotel while you are——"

"Possibly. I don't know. But in any case you are not to come here again. Report to me only as I have directed, and accomplish it so that other eyes will not see you do so."

"Very well, monsieur."

"You may hasten now."

Nick, who had had only about two hours sleep in the laundry that morning; stretched himself upon the bed after the departure of Legarde, and slept two hours more, when he awoke greatly refreshed.

Then he descended to the café and ordered a substantial dinner, of which he also stood greatly in need.

After he had smoked a cigar, following his dinner, and had read the papers, it was nine o'clock in the evening, and, remembering that he had an appointment at Ling Gee's laundry at ten, he started out to keep it.

He felt that he had accomplished a very fair afternoon's work, for he had the movements of the three principal actors in the anarchistic drama so well covered that nothing concerning them could escape him.

Not only would he be successful in preventing the explosion that was to blow up the prison, not only would he save the chief of police down there from all danger, not only would he himself successfully avoid all the dangers that had been threatened against him at that meeting, but in the end he believed he would round up every man of the twelve who had conspired together.

There remained only one point with which he was

still dissatisfied, and that was about the immediate safety of Michael O'Brien.

But for some reason he placed a great deal of dependence upon the Chinaman who answered to the name of Li Hung, as to that.

When he arrived at the laundry he found the appearance of it much the same as it had been the preceding night. Ling Gee was ironing in the window as industriously as if he had not left it since, but he stopped with a smile and a chatter of welcome when the detective entered; then he motioned toward the back room.

But Nick stopped where he was long enough to explain about the coat that had been ordered.

"I am not at all sure that it will ever be delivered," he said, "but if it is, you must accept it as if you expected it. There is nothing to pay on it, and it is a present for you from me. It is the nicest purple silk I could find."

Ling Gee thought more of such a present than of anything the detective could have done for him, and said so; and then the detective passed into the rear room.

Wu Sing was there waiting; and he, too, had gotten himself up in a little better style than he was accustomed to appear in, as a laundryman.

When Nick mentioned the fact, he explained:

"My countrymen, if they should see us on the street together, if I was not dressed well, would think that I should walk farther behind you," he said. "As it is I shall keep a little in the rear, but near enough so that I can hear what you say to me."

"There is one thing that I wish to say to all of you, and you, particularly, Li Hung, before we go out, and that is that not a word of English must be spoken between us so long as I wear this disguise. Is that understood?"

It was; and presently, in company with Wu Sing, Nick left the laundry. Li Hung had not had a thing to report in reference to the prisoner he had agreed to find.

The leader, whom the detective was now seeking, was the only one of the three men who interested him the most, that he had not seen without the false wig and whiskers; but he had received a fairly good description of his appearance from Li Hung, and he believed he would know him. He anticipated that he would recognize him if he should chance to hear his voice.

Wu Sing guided the detective across the city to the West Side, and then up-town for a considerable distance until at last they turned into Christopher Street, and from there into Grove, where presently Wu pointed to a house and said:

"There, mandarin, is the house where he entered and did not come out again."

At the very instant when Wu mentioned the fact the front door of the house was opened, and a man came out and ran down the steps, turning toward them so that they met face to face, and Nick, seeing in this an opportunity not to be lost, stepped squarely in front of him and inquired in broken English such as he might be expected to use:

"Thisee Glove Stleet, please?"

"Get out of my way you infernal chink!" was the brutal response; but it was enough.

Nick had heard all that he desired, for it was the voice of the man who was the leader of the group of anarchists; and inasmuch as they had stopped directly under a light, he had also obtained a good view of the man's face.

In the meantime the leader had hurried on as if he were in great haste, and now Nick and Wu turned and followed him.

He boarded a Sixth Avenue car without looking back at all, and Nick and Wu availed themselves of the same vehicle, for Nick did not believe that the man had noticed them sufficiently to recognize them again.

There are many people to whom all Chinamen look alike, and Nick took the chance that this man was one such.

At all events he did not so much as glance at them while they stood on the rear platform of the car; but at Twenty-seventh Street he got down and hurried westward toward the house from which he had taken the woman to the meeting the preceding night.

And then a happy thought occurred to Nick.

"I would be willing to bet considerable," he told himself silently, "that the leader is going to that house after one of those women, to take her to the place where Michael is imprisoned. If that is so, we arrived in front of the house in Grove Street just in time."

The man walked rapidly through the street, not turning his head once, and finally he ran up the steps and rang the bell of the house which adjoins Danny's; and that reminded Nick that he had entirely forgotten to ask about Danny when he returned to the laundry.

But that could wait. More important matters were on hand just now.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TORTURED PRISONER.

"The man will not remain in that house long," the detective told Wu. "I think he will come out again presently accompanied by one of the women, and that then they will go to the house where the prisoner is confined for whom Li is searching. We will see."

Fifteen minutes later—it was then close to eleven o'clock—a man and a woman did come out of the house; but now the man had adorned himself with the fiery red whiskers and wig once more, and the woman was heavily veiled.

They turned toward Eighth Avenue and walked rapidly; and at the corner they waited for a car; waited, in fact, until several had passed them, and until Nick made up his mind that they wanted one of the through cars which go all the way to the ship canal near Two Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street.

Believing this to be a fact, he directed Wu to go to the corner above them while he himself went to the corner below; and when a through car came along he boarded it on the chance that they would do the same.

The result was that he was already on board the car when the leader and the woman took their seats, and they did not so much as glance at him as they passed him on the platform.

Wu got on at the next corner, and the long journey up-town was begun.

It developed, however, that it was not to be a long journey after all. It appeared that they had not waited for that particular car because of any wish to ride all the way to the end of Manhattan Island. Doubtless they had been engaged in some argument, and for that reason had permitted several cars to pass them.

At all events they got out again at Fifty-ninth Street and transferred to a car going west; but after traveling one short block they changed again to an Amsterdam Avenue car going north, and continued on that one until One Hundred and Fifty-second Street, where they left it and passed through to Broadway and thence down the steep hill toward the river.

The river front along there, as every one knows, is lined with boat-houses; also there are all sorts and conditions of boats anchored in the waters just off shore; likewise there are always quantities of small boats along the beach which one may hire for a small sum.

The man and woman entered one of these and pushed off from the shore, and Nick for a moment was rather bewildered as to what it would be best to do.

If he also took a boat and followed them it would attract too much attention, for Chinamen are not in the habit of going rowing for pleasure, and these two he was following would surely observe the two foreigners in that case.

"We will wait," he told Wu; "at least, until there seems to be danger of our losing them."

But, as it happened, there was no such danger.

Anchored a little way off the shore was an old scow upon which a small house had been built and toward this the leader of the anarchists directed his course until, having made fast to it, he climbed aboard and then assisted his companion up after him. Then, having made the small boat fast to the scow, they disappeared inside the house on the deck.

Nick glanced quickly up and down the shore which was, of course, deserted. At that late hour there was nobody there to observe them, and indeed had it not been for the steep hill and the shadows cast by the trees it would have been difficult for the detective and the Chinaman to have followed the pair as far as they had.

There were plenty of boats along the shore, but not one could be discovered with oars in it, and presently he gave up the search, believing that it would be just as well to wait as he was until they came ashore again.

But while he waited he gave Wu the instructions he was to follow.

"This is the only street by which they can return to the brow of the hill," he said to the Chinaman. "I want you to go back up the hill and wait there until you see those two approaching again; then keep out of sight, but follow them wherever they go. The man will probably take the woman home and then go to his own home; but I wish you to follow, for I want to know where he does go. Afterward, return to the laundry and wait for me."

When the detective was alone, he selected a secluded spot where he was concealed from view, and awaited the return of the two from the boat.

It was almost an hour before they came; but at last he saw them clamber into their boat and pull for the shore.

He permitted them to pass him, and then waited until he was sure they were out of hearing and would not probably return for anything forgotten; then he hurried to the shore and pushed off the same boat they had used.

It did not take him long to reach the scow after that, or to force the door of the deck house after he had done so; and then he produced his electric torch and threw a light around him.

The deck house consisted of only one apartment, which was utterly bare of everything; there was literally nothing in it at all save in the very center of the

room there was a hatch, padlocked, to be sure, but Nick very quickly forced that.

Below him was a ladder descending into the hold, if hold it might be called, and after throwing his light about him and perceiving that the hold was apparently as bare as the deck house, he descended rapidly to the foot of the ladder.

Before him the open hold extended to the end of the unwieldy craft; but when he turned, he discovered that a thin bulkhead divided the hold into two parts.

There was a small door in the bulkhead. It was fastened by a wooden bar that had been placed across it, and this Nick lost no time in removing.

One quick flashing of his light into the interior of that compartment discovered for him what he sought.

A man was lying there laid out in the shape of a letter X, and without so much as a blanket under him or over him. His arms were extended above his head as far as they would reach and each wrist was fastened with cords to an iron ring and bolt screwed firmly into the planking. His legs were extended and fastened in the same manner so that it was impossible for him to move half an inch in any direction.

Added to this torture, a gag had been forced into his mouth and tied there, so that the victim was speechless as well as helpless.

With one leap Nick Carter was at his side. With quick motions he severed the cords that held him and also those which held the gag in place. Then he half-raised him in his arms.

"Is it you, Michael?" he asked; for he had been obliged for the moment to lay aside his electric torch in order to make use of both his hands.

"Yes," came the feeble reply. "Are you—Mr. Carter?"

"I am, thank Heaven," was Nick's quick response.

"I think I should have died here in another day or two," Michael continued. "They were here a little while ago; did you see them?"

"Yes."

"That man—I don't know his name—gave me a little food and a few cups of water. It was the first I have had since Sunday morning, and that seems a week ago."

"It is now Monday night, about midnight," replied Nick.

"It has been terrible. Thank Heaven you are here. But somehow I have thought all along that you would find out that I had disappeared and would help me."

Nick always carried a small flask of brandy with him that held about a gill, and now he prevailed upon Michael to take some of it, with the result that he was soon able to stand on his feet, although his legs were severely strained by the terrible experience he had passed through.

"While you are pulling yourself together, Michael," he said, "I will go out on the deck and take a look around me. I have an idea which, if it can be carried out, will be a corker."

He was gone a very short time, and when he returned and once more made use of his light, he said, pointing to an oil-can that was near them:

"I'm going to give the fire department in this section of the city a little bit of a scare, and perhaps the nearest fireboat will have a short night run, to boot. There is a can of oil here and the upper part of this old wreck is as dry as tinder. There is nothing near enough to it to suffer any damage, and the scow is fastened to the anchor by a chain which can't burn off and allow the boat to drift against another one. I am going to set it afire, Michael, and when those fiends find that the scow has been destroyed by fire they will believe that you were burned up with it. I want you to go out on the deck now and get into the small boat."

When that was done Nick used the oil to the best advantage. He also kicked the bulkhead that has been mentioned into bits and piled the debris where it would do the most good—or the most harm, whichever expression seems the more adaptable. Then, having ignited the pile he hurriedly rejoined Michael in the small boat and they rowed rapidly to the shore.

By the time they were half-way up the hill the flames he had started communicated themselves to the deck house and Nick knew that the old scow would be gutted, but that no damage could possibly be communicated to anything else along the shore.

At Broadway they descended into the subway just as fire-engines went rattling through the street—and it may as well be said right here that it was the last that was ever heard of the old scow, and that, as Nick had supposed, the anarchists did believe, after the fire was reported to them by one of the women, that Michael had perished.

"Now, Michael," said the detective, when they were on the train, "tell me how you got yourself into this fix?"

"Why, Saturday morning a messenger came to the place where I was working in Philadelphia and told me that you were outside in a carriage and wished to see me at once. I went out, and a man I did not know was standing at the carriage door. When I paused, he told me that you were inside, but that you had been hurt, I was to enter."

"And you were not suspicious?"

"No. It did not occur to me. The man opened the door, and I saw another man swathed in bandages seated in one corner of the carriage. I stooped down to enter, and received a blow on the back of my head which laid me out. I did not return to consciousness until I was in the place where you found me to-night. I see that we are in New York, but I have no idea at all how I got here."

It was Nick's turn then, and he told Michael of the entire plot, and how it had worked so far.

"I am going to take you to some quarters that you will think rather strange, Michael," he said. "As strange as my appearance in this Chinaman's rig about which you have chosen to make no remark."

"Well, you know I understand that you adopt many disguises. I knew your voice, and that was quite sufficient. But where are you taking me?"

"To a Chinese laundry way down on the East Side. I want you to lay up there and rest, and keep out of sight until this case is completed. After that you can return to your work."

"Don't you wish me to go with you to Washington?"

"No. I want you to do just as I have told you."

"All right. I'll obey orders. To tell the truth, I don't feel very energetic. I suppose it will take a little time to get over this stiffness. My legs ache like the toothache."

"Naturally."

"I hope this will have been my last experience with the anarchists, Mr. Carter."

"I think it will be, Michael."

"I surely have had my share of their enmity."

"Yes; and more than your share."

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF THE CASE.

"W-a-s-h-ing*ton! Wash*ington!"

The conductor said it quite plainly—for a conductor, Nick Carter thought as he left the seat he had been occupying and followed the man who had been seated directly in front of him, from the car; for that man was the short, thick-set fellow who was the present leader of the group of anarchists who had laid out so considerable for the city of Washington.

In accordance with the directions he had given his followers at the "dark" meeting, he had traveled alone to the capital city; that is, he supposed himself to be alone, for he had no idea that the very man he most hated and feared in all the world occupied the seat directly behind him all the way down.

The detective was still disguised as the Chinaman Foo Chung Liang. The time was Sunday afternoon one week since the secret meeting of the anarchists which Nick Carter had so surreptitiously attended.

During that time he had kept the leader constantly under espionage, for upon that man depended everything. He had told the "instrument" that he would not deliver the bombs into his keeping until they arrived in Washington.

Nick knew that Legarde, in pursuit of his man, had gone to Washington early in the week, for the tailor, despairing of finding Nick Carter, whom he was to kill in New York, was advised by his friends to get early upon the scene of their plots, as it was thought the detective might possibly have gone there.

Also Nick knew from Captain McCafferty that the saloonkeeper who had been selected as the "instrument" had also gone down there Wednesday, instead of waiting till Saturday evening, as he had intended. He did not understand the reason for this early move, unless it was done in order to obtain an interview with the prisoners before the last act was made.

What he did know was that between the two men whom McCafferty had sent, and Legarde, whom he had employed, he would secure every scrap of information that was obtainable about the movements of these men since their arrival in Washington.

There would be very little that McCafferty's men would not know, and very little that Legarde would not know; and what one did not discover the others would.

The detective did not keep too close to the man he was pursuing, and it was not necessary, since Conner, of the Secret Service, to whom he had telegraphed, met him at the station with a carriage driven by a fully instructed government officer, and the two were soon riding slowly along the avenue following the footsteps of the "leader" who appeared to disdain the uses of carriages and cars alike.

"That is the leader of the group, Con," said the detective, as soon as he was seated beside his friend. "They have got an 'appointed place,' as they call it, somewhere here in Washington, and if I am not mistaken he ought to be making toward it now."

The man turned south along the avenue and presently halted at the corner of Fourth Street, and he had been standing there only a short time when he was joined by another man who approached and stood near him for a few moments without speaking.

"That other chap is the 'instrument,'" said the detective. "He is disguised, but I would know him among a thousand. And say! Look over yonder, on the opposite side of the avenue. Do you see that fellow, Con?"

"Yes."

"That is Berger; the chap who was going to blow me up. Legarde should be not far away, and by the same token, as you would say, one of McCafferty's men should be somewhere around."

"When are you going to make the arrests, Nick?" asked Conner.

"When I get the evidence dead to rights so that I can send them all up for good long terms. I think that Legarde should have some valuable information for me by this time. He is about the slickest in the world at his branch of the business. There he is now. See him, Con? Over there in the doorway of the little cigar-store."

"Yes. Is that Legarde?"

"Yes. I think I will stroll over there and speak to him. Those fellows are so busy talking now that they won't glance at any one so far away from them as I will be. You wait here and watch them. Never mind the tall chap, unless you see the other one pass something to him. If you do see that, it will be the bombs, and I want to know it."

"All right."

Legarde, who recognized the disguise, saw Nick approaching him; and when the detective arrived, he

greeted him calmly, inasmuch as no one was near them.

"I have good news for you," he said, as the detective passed close to him. And as he uttered the words he pressed an envelope into Nick's hand. "It is all there, up to half an hour ago," he added.

Nick accepted the roll, passed on into the cigar-store, where he made some purchases, and then he hurried back again to the carriage where he had left Conner.

"That rosary business developed into quite a case, didn't it?" * said Conner, as the detective resumed his seat.

"It certainly did. Great oaks from little acorns grow, you know. Now wait while I read this report of Legarde's. Watch that leader, Con."

"I will."

There was an interval of silence after that, and then, just as Nick was storing the report away in one of his hidden pockets of the Chinese costume, Conner exclaimed:

"Look, Nick! He is passing the bombs now. At least that is what I would suppose. He has given the tall man his satchel, and they are about to separate. I suppose the bombs are in that satchel, don't you?"

"I haven't a doubt of it. Now listen. Let them go. I have no more interest in the present movements of that leader, for I know where to find him to-night."

"You do?"

"Yes. Listen. Legarde says in this report that a meeting of the entire group—they are all here to a man—is to be held to-night at a house in D Street, Southwest. He overheard all the arrangements when they were made."

"That is a likely section of the city for such a meeting," said Conner, with a grin.

"Legarde has been to see the woman who keeps the house, and he has both intimidated and bribed her until she has consented to admit him and another he will take with him, and place them so that they can hear all that is said at the meeting. Now, Con, I want you to find me about four or five men who understand both German and Russian; do you think you can do that between now and eight o'clock to-night?"

"I think so, Nick."

"Also I wish you to go and see the chief; tell him all that I have told you; tell him that we will want a squad of about twenty men to surround that house at exactly ten o'clock to-night and to permit nobody to pass out or in after that time. The meeting is called at nine; the group is ordered to be present, to a man, by a quarter to nine. You and I and Legarde, with McCafferty's two men, and the four you will furnish, will enter the house at eight and take up our station to watch and listen. We will let the men finish the business of the meeting, and we will all be witnesses to it. Then, as is their invariable habit, they will go away singly. They always do that. As they pass out at the door they will fall one by one into the arms of the major's men. That is all."

"What about the bombs?"

"It isn't likely that the 'instrument' will take them to the meeting with him. If he does, it is a chance that we must accept. If he does not, they will be in his room, and Legarde knows where that is. We can go there after the capture is made."

"Isn't it likely that some of them will have bombs on them, and may use them, when we undertake the capture?"

"It is possible; but by taking them one by one as I have directed, there will really be very little danger. Now don't fail to be there at that house where the meeting is to be held, a little before eight to-night. Is that understood?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, I think I will skirmish for something to eat and also get myself out of this rig."

* * * * * * *

There remains practically nothing more to relate of the conduct of this case.

It is sufficient to say that everything went off exactly as Nick Carter planned it, and that the meeting not being a "dark" one, there was plenty of evidence obtained by the listeners to convict every one of that group of conspiracy to commit murder.

The meeting finally adjourned, after all the plans had been gone over carefully and every arrangement for committing the outrages was agreed upon to the fullest detail, for that had been the purpose in calling it.

Moreover, it was learned that the prisoners were fully cognizant of what was intended, and they were therefore equally guilty with those outside the prison.

And then, when the meeting adjourned—when, as Nick had foretold, the conspirators left the house one by one, each man as he stepped out at the door, walked directly into the waiting arms of a blue-coated officer who waited to receive him.

The captures were made without noise, without excitement of any kind, and without a casualty, although among the twelve men there were nine who carried bombs in at least one of their pockets.

Later, at the house where the "instrument" had his room, the bombs that were intended for use against the prison and the person of the chief of police were also found.

We need only add that every one of the twelve was sent to prison for long terms; that three of them were sent up for life, and that of those in the prison, Vassili and Tomschik were condemned to death, and Zenobia Zara received a life sentence.

Ling Gee never received his coat of purple silk, but he got something else just as good.

THE END.

The next number (607) will contain "The Mysterious Mr. Peters; or, Nick Carter's Unknown Enemy."

*See No. 604, NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "The Convict's Secret."

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THE BROTHER'S PERIL.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

"Lay out, there, and furl that flying jib, and then come in to help reef topsails!" shouted the mate of the ship *Campbell*, bound to Australia.

The words were addressed to Tom Bunk—a fine-looking young sailor of twenty-two, who had the reputation of being a man of great activity and daring.

He had been once seen to climb a rope leading to the truck hand over hand, and dive under the ship from the foretopsail. No wonder, therefore, that he had the flying jib furled and was on deck in time for the order to close reef topsails.

The wind was blowing a gale, and the vessel was dashing along almost on her beam-ends, with everything crackling and rattling. The white water came up roaring over her bows, and the seas now and then deluged the after-deck, sweeping away whatever was loose.

A fair cabin-passenger, Grace Worrel, by name, the daughter of an old man confined in his berth with the gout, stood on the quarter-deck, clinging to the mizzen-shrouds. She was beautiful, with dark, shining brown hair, dimpled cheeks, a neat, little, well-rounded figure, and diminutive hands and feet.

Being but seventeen years old, her round face had that peculiar childish expression blended with that of womanly dignity which for ages has captivated the hearts of the sterner sex.

Tom Bunk, dashing up the main rigging, could not help directing an admiring glance toward the fair creature on the quarter-deck. Her eyes shone like stars as she watched the lithe figures of the men running up the rigging; but she looked anxious, especially when a shrill cry from one of the hands already aloft proclaimed that he was in peril.

He was a boy, whose feet slipping from the maintopsail foot-rope, near the end of the yard, had caused him to fall headlong, where he caught himself by the carring rope depending from the sail, to which he now hung with both hands. The rolling and pitching of the ship made him sway from side to side, and a strand of the rope having parted, he was every moment in danger of falling.

One of the men, leaning over, grasped him by the collar of his jacket, but the cloth tearing in his grasp, the boy was worse off than before.

A sailor with a bowline-hitch was advancing swiftly along the foot-rope, when, with one wild, despairing cry, the boy let go his hold and fell into the bubbling, hissing water of the stormy ocean.

"Man overboard!" rang shrilly through the craft. The youngster who had fallen was the brother of Tom Bunk, who now, without a moment's hesitation, plunged into the water after the struggling lad.

With much difficulty, the ship was brought up into the wind, and a boat lowered, manned by a good crew. It was doubtful, however, if the frail vessel would live in the heavy sea now raging. The spray broke over it in clouds, deluging its occupants to the skin, and almost sweeping them from their thwarts, while the gunwales, rolling under, took in such great quantities of water that one man was kept constantly bailing.

Meanwhile, Tom Bunk, having reached his brother, who was unable to swim, held him firmly, keeping his head above water, and encouraging him with hopes of being speedily picked up by the approaching boat.

The captain of the *Campbell*, with great difficulty, had veered ship, so that the craft now was approaching the seamen with rapidity, tossing the water from her bows, and roaring like a mad bull.

The boat soon was alongside the two brothers, who were promptly picked up, and now all eyes were turned toward the ship, as she came booming and thundering on. The men aboard were all clustered about the bows, watching the tossing boat with breathless interest and anxiety, while the captain, trumpet in hand, stood issuing his orders to the helmsmen.

"Luff, luff, there at that wheel!" he screamed, as a great sea lifted the ship and bore her crashing along toward the boat. "Lively, there, or we'll run them down."

Two men were stationed at the wheel, and were, therefore, able to obey the order promptly. The ship, however, could not be brought up a quarter of a point.

"Square in the yards!" yelled the skipper. "Up with that wheel!"

As he could not luff, he had hopes of clearing the boat by keeping off.

The sturdy helmsmen raised the wheel quickly, and doubtless the craft would have answered it at once, but for a huge counter sea, which came crashing against her weather bow with the noise of thunder, making every timber reel. Now she came steadily on toward the boat, which the mate was vainly endeavoring to direct to one side. The multitudinous irregular chopping seas, crossing each other, prevented him from steering the boat as he wished to do, so that there seemed every prospect of her being run down.

"Aye, aye, there's no help for it," remarked an old sailor, who pulled the 'midship oar; "we are bound to be run down by that ship. Heaven have mercy on us!"

"If that dear gal only knew enough of sea matters to stand by with a rope, she might help us after we are stoven," remarked one of the men.

The person alluded to was Grace Worrel, who stood near the rail astern, watching the imperiled men, with pale face and clasped hands. Her long hair, blown loose by the wind, hung in thick masses below her waist; she looked the very picture of terror and anxiety.

On swept the ship with the speed of a rocket, neither swinging to larboard or starboard. There was a cracking, crashing sound, a hoarse, gurgling cry, and the boat, stoven by the vessel's huge bows, was never seen again.

There was a shout of grief from the men on deck, and a low scream from Grace, who, with hands over her eyes, rushed into the cabin, as if to shut out from her mental vision the circumstance of that boat being stoven by that merciless ship.

The stateroom was empty, and the girl, staggering to a seat near the cabin windows, gave full vent to her feelings of anguish.

"All were lost—lost—lost!" she muttered. "Oh, my God, how terrible!"

Then she pictured to herself the manly form and handsome face of Tom Bunk, whom with softest eyes she had watched while he worked below or aloft; she pictured his body being rolled along under the dark keel of the tempest-driven ship. As this thought entered her mind she fancied she heard a faint cry.

"Help, help, help!"

She rose quickly. She threw her dark hair back from her ears, and with neck arched like an antelope's listened intently.

"Help, help, help!"

The voice seemed to come from the air close to her ears; she thought she recognized the voice of Tom Bunk, and a feeling of superstitious terror took possession of her.

"Help, quick, for Heaven's sake!"

This time the voice was louder than before, and now she was convinced that it came from the outside of the ship. She threw open one of the cabin windows, and, peering out, discovered Tom Bunk clinging to a short rope, depending from a ring about two feet beneath the window. He was not alone, for before being run down he had lashed his brother to him with pieces of ratline stuff, and these lashings still holding, the boy was closely united to his brave young relative.

"Thank God!" cried Tom, as the girl's beautiful face appeared above him. "Thank God! quick, Miss Grace, please throw me a rope."

She glanced round her, but could see no rope in the cabin.

"I will go on deck for one," she gasped, and was about starting when Tom sang out in a hoarse voice:

"No, no, it will be too late. I cannot hold on long enough for you to come back! Already I feel as if I must let go; my fingers are benumbed! Good-by, Miss Grace, good-by."

"No!" she screamed; "hold on for just a moment longer. Help, help, help! on deck there!" she continued, raising her voice.

"No use!" gasped Tom; "they cannot hear you, and I'm too far below you for you to reach me your hand. Good-by, I must let go."

"Oh, Heavens, is there no way to save you!" cried Grace, in agony.

"Good-by," continued Tom, "and Heaven help you, Miss Grace!"

"No—hold—one second longer!" she shrieked.

A sudden thought had flashed across her mind. She pulled her scissors from her pocket, and, quick as lightning, severed one of the long, thick locks of her shining hair. Twisting this with almost inconceivable rapidity, she lowered it to the young sailor, taking a turn with the other end around a spike near the top of the window, so as to keep a firm hold.

"You have saved me and my brother, miss!" shouted Tom gladly, as he wound the glittering coil around his wrist. "Ah, who but one of your sweet sex would have hit upon such a plan!"

He drew himself up—he entered the cabin, and laid upon a sofa his senseless brother, who was soon restored.

I have little more to add.

There was rejoicing over the rescue of the brothers, although the fate of the rest of the boat's crew still cast a shadow over all hearts.

The noble conduct of Grace Worrel excited the admiration of every man, and her health was drunk by officers and crew.

Tom and the fair passenger became great friends, and in course of time were married. Now, whenever the husband kisses the bright hair upon his wife's head, he thinks of the time when her beautiful locks were the means of saving the lives of his brother and himself.

DROWNING DANGEROUS THINGS.

"How oft the means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done!" The sapient Shakespearianism has evidently been taken to heart by the police authorities of New York City.

More than 5,000 revolvers, daggers, stiletttoes, bowie-knives, and other weapons were taken out, a little while ago, in boats from the harbor, and sunk far apart in deep water.

Many of these objects were valuable, and the whole would have sold for more than $10,000. It formerly was the custom to sell seized revolvers at police headquarters.

Pawnbrokers bought them cheaply, and several times revolvers have been sold over and over again, each sale arising from a fresh tragedy. They have been sunk to end this.

CHANCE TO BE GARROTED.

Executions for capital offenses in Cuba are by the garrote. The present executioner in Havana in the carcel is a life-prisoner, who gets $17.50 for each execution.

He takes personal pride in the garrote, which is a very simple affair, much less imposing even than the electric chair. The room in which justice is done is very small and very somber.

The garrote is upon a little platform, all painted in black. The prisoner is seated in a chair, the band is fitted about his neck, and a single turn of the lever completes the operation.

Giving a private view to some Americans, the executioner showed with simple pride how nicely oiled the apparatus was and conveyed an invitation through an interpreter to any one of them who wished to make a trial of the device. Then he grinned maliciously when the offer was refused.

On one occasion recently the executioner refused to do his work without pay in advance. There was no way of overcoming his objections, and as he couldn't get out to spend the money first the jail officials had to come to his terms.

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